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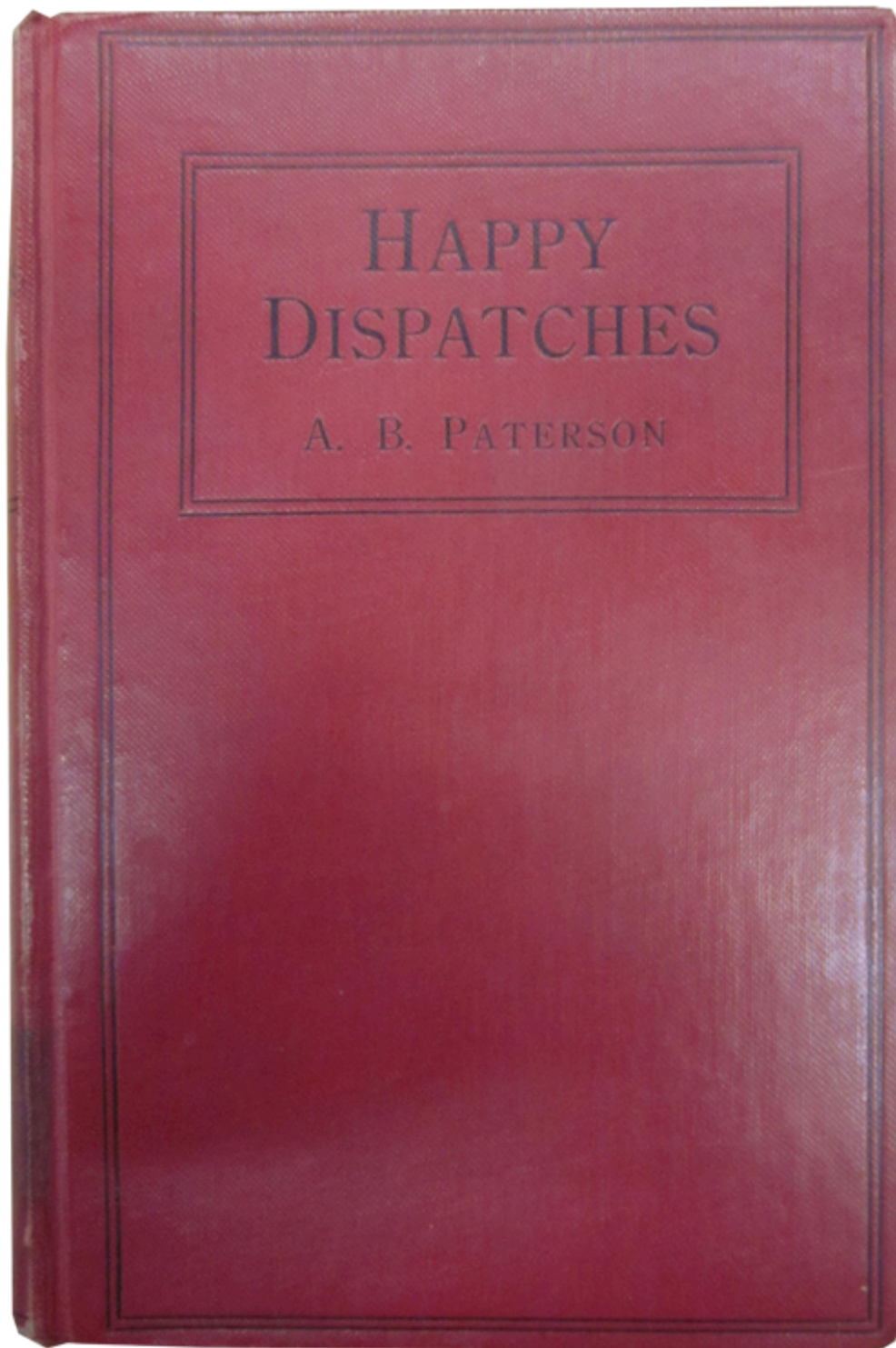
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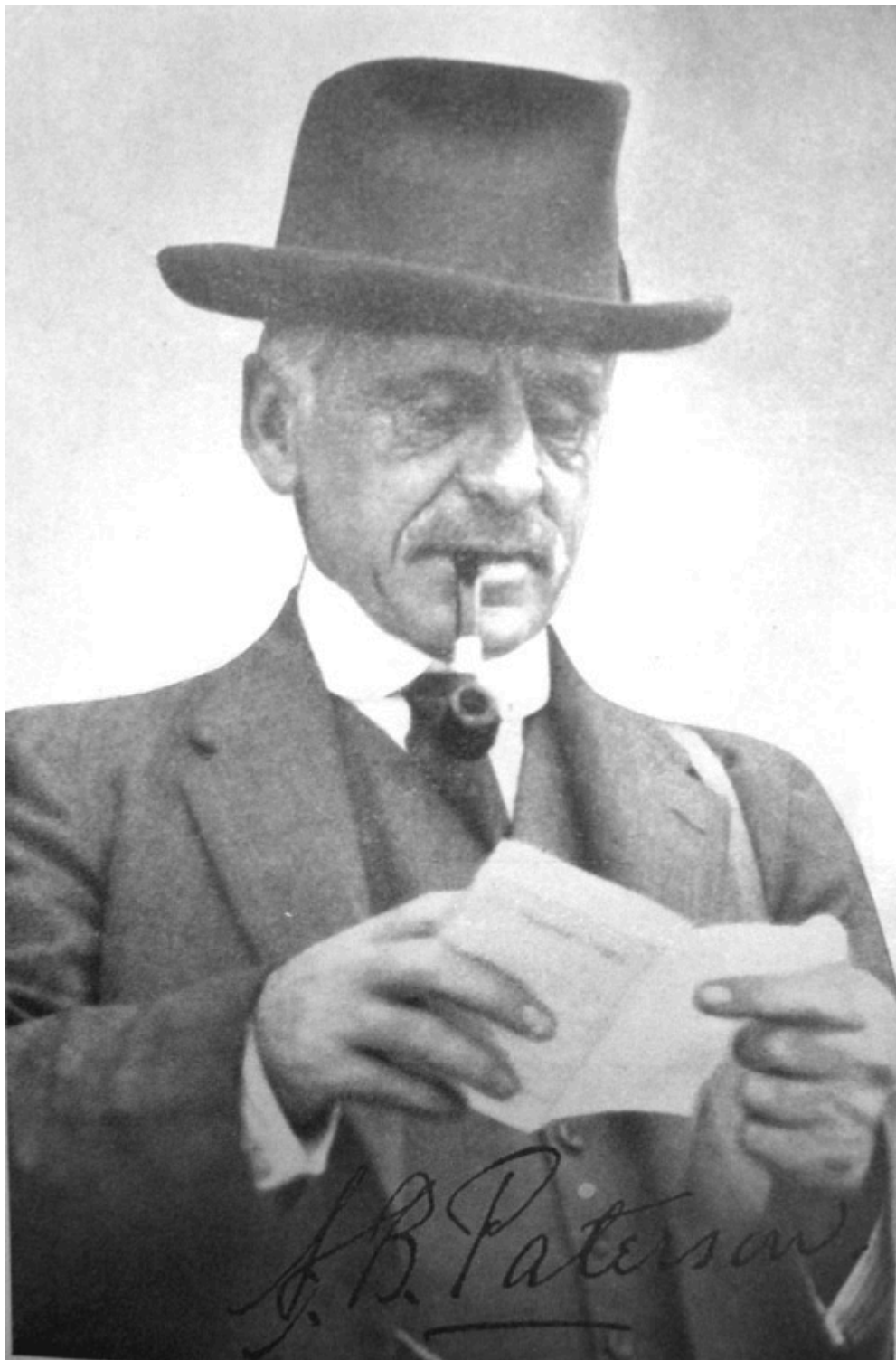
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BANJO PATERSON HAPPY DISPATCHES



Journalistic pieces from Banjo Paterson's
days as a war correspondent





HAPPY DISPATCHES

By

A. B. ("BANJO") PATERSON

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Happy Dispatches

A. B. ("BANJO") Paterson

CONTENTS

Author's Foreword

Chapter 1. - Sir Alfred Milner

Chapter 2. - Winston Churchill

Chapter 3. - Lord Roberts, French, Haig, and Others

Chapter 4. - Lord Derby

Chapter 5. - A Dutch Consul

Chapter 6. - General Chaffee

Chapter 7. - "Chinese" Morrison

Chapter 8. - An Unknown Celebrity

Chapter 9. - Marie Lloyd

Chapter 10. - Phil May

Chapter 11. - Rudyard Kipling

Chapter 12. - Captain Glossop

Chapter 13. - Lady Dudley

Chapter 14. - Captain Towse, V.C.

Chapter 15. - "Hell-Fire Jack"

Chapter 16. - Lord Allenby

Chapter 17. - Lord Allenby (Continued)

Author's Foreword

The roads of the world lie open to those who, like Kipling's marine, are prepared to buy a ham and see life. In the past forty years there have been opportunities of seeing a good deal, and the writer of these memoirs, though he may not have seen as much as some people, certainly saw a lot more than others. The walrus did not eat as many oysters as the carpenter, but he ate all that he could get.

A looker-on, they say, sees most of the game; and a writer who is not very proficient in the game may be able to say something about the players. In the course of the last four decades, the author has had the luck to see some of the great men of the world stripped of their official panoply and sitting, as one might say, in their pyjamas. Such men as Lord Allenby, Winston Churchill, "Chinese" Morrison, Rudyard Kipling and Lords Roberts, French and Haig, all had their human side. From notes made at

the time, a series of lightning sketches of those celebrities, and lesser ones, are here presented. The interest in the subject may compensate for some crudity in draughtsmanship.

It should be explained that the author started on his travels unencumbered by any knowledge of the world, other than what could be gleaned from life in the Australian bush and in a solicitor's office in Sydney: without any knowledge of war other than that learnt by watching sham fights in Australia. Consequently, if anything educational has got into this book it is only by accident. The various wars are only utilized as backgrounds for the great soldiers who stalked across the stage. One cannot write about great generals without mentioning wars.

Chapter 1

Sir Alfred Milner

My first celebrity—A soldier in stays—A Royal horse-dealer—Prince Henry's uncle— Buys a horse and loses it—The old army—Duchesses pull strings—Jobbing in generals —Pressure on the Press—Admiral Chichester uses language

Let us begin this odyssey with some extracts from a diary:

November 1899—En route for South African War. By all accounts, these Boers are only part human. There is an ambulance outfit on board, and I ask an ambulance orderly—a retired sergeant-major of British infantry—whether the Boers will fire on the ambulances.

He says: "Of course, they'll fire on the hambulances. The 'ave no respect for the 'elpless. They've even been known to fire on the cavalry."

Colonel Williams, commander of our hospital outfit, fully believes this, and is training his men in riflshooting at a box towed over the stern, and with revolvers at bottles thrown overside. No one has as yet sunk a bottle, and some of the shooters have even missed the Indian Ocean.

Approaching Africa. Few of the Australians on board have ever been away from Australia; but the English, Irish and Scotch are developing national rivalries. A party of Highlanders (quite distinct from the Scotch) are holding some sort of a celebration. They ask an Australian named Robertson whether his ancestors were Highlanders.

He says: "No; but for ignorance and squalid savagery, I will back my ancestors against any Highlanders in the world."

Luckily for him, the Highlanders on board all belong to different units and different clans. This Robertson apparently knows something about Highlanders, for he says: "If they started anything against me, they'd be fighting each other before you could say knife."

First experience of the troubles of active service with green troops on board a ship. The army medical men came aboard a day earlier than anyone else and barricaded themselves in a square of the ship. They closed two doors of access to other parts of the ship, commandeered all the hammocks they could lay their hands on, and sat tight. A squadron of cursing Lancers fought and struggled in the alleyways, and traffic was, to put it mildly, congested. The men who went short of hammocks had a few well-chosen words to say, but the P.M.O. battled nobly for his men and said that, if the doors were opened and a thoroughfare made of his camping-grounds, he would not have enough equipment left to bind up a sore thumb.

The machine-gun section wanted an acre of deck for their drills, and the signallers wanted the same area. All stores were below decks and could only be got at by one of the three great powers—the chief officer, the boatswain and the carpenter. Consequently, everybody followed the chief officer, the boatswain and the carpenter about like lost lambs. Thus we fared across the Indian Ocean, toiling, rejoicing, and borrowing gear and equipment—generally without the knowledge or consent of the lender.

Another diary extract runs:

November 30th—At Capetown. Met my first Boer prisoner. He is a doctor, holding an English degree, and can make a fifty break at billiards. Apparently these Boers are at any rate partially civilized. He says that, if the Boers catch our hospital orderlies with rifles in the ambulances, they will be entitled to shoot them. He evidently looks on us as less civilized than his own people—the poor fish. He got hurt in some way during a raid and the British are only keeping him till he is fit to go back.

Met Sir Alfred Milner (afterwards Lord Milner), Governor of the Cape. He is my first world-wide celebrity, for our country is a bit off the beaten track for celebrities. Milner is a long, dark, wiry man, with a somewhat high-strung temperament; but he has been a pressman, so nothing ought to rattle him. He has a lot on his shoulders, as he conducted all the negotiations with Kruger. If any one man is responsible for the war, then Milner is the man. Hitherto, the only English magnates I have met have been State governors—discreet personages, whose official view of life could be summed up in three words: “I’d better not.” But this man has actually used the words “You must”; and has stood to his guns. Being as green as grass in the ways of the world, I had expected to meet a combination of Mussolini and Sherlock Holmes, and I was surprised to find the great English pro-consul, whom the

Boers hated just as heartily as we hated Kruger, to be a man that put on less swagger than, say, one of our own government officials. When I told him that I wanted to get to the front as a correspondent with Australian troops, he laughed and said that the military were complaining that there would soon be more correspondents than fighting men at the front; but he would give me a note to the Chief Press Censor to say that the Australians ought to have a man of their own so that each part of Australia would get whatever credit was coming to it.

When writing my name in the visitors' book, I saw that Schreiner, the Cape Premier, had written his name every day in it. Schreiner, and his ministry—in fact most of the Cape people—were bitterly opposed to the war, and Schreiner was calling every day to show that he, like Jorrock's celebrated huntsman, James Pigg, was “always in the way and willing to oblige,” in case Milner wished to change his mind.

He had some job, had Sir Alfred Milner, as the German Emperor was sending messages of congratulation to Kruger, and the American Press were roasting the war for all they were worth. Milner was my first experience of the unhurried Englishman. I met the ‘jumpy’ sort later on. But the jumpy sort never get into those big jobs; or, if they do, they emulate a certain colonel of Scot's Greys who had a magnificent voice and a stirring word of command. He came to grief on active service. Someone said he roared himself into his job, and roared himself out of it.

At Capetown—Sir Alfred Milner finds time to ask me if I would take two ladies to a jackal hunt with a pack of English hounds. I tell him that my three horses have been sent on with the troops and I have no horse.

“Oh,” he says, “an Australian can always get a horse.”

December 1st.—Japhet in search of a father, or Paterson in search of a horse. Every horse in Capetown is either commandeered by the military or is hardly able to carry a saddle. Out in the bay there are ships full of horses, but the bull-headed old English Admiral in charge of the port won't let them come ashore. I try about a dozen places and am met with derision. I would hate to be beaten.

This Admiral, by the way, one Chichester, was one of the characters of the war. He ordered transports in and out, cursing freely all the time. The captain of the *Kent* that brought us over, had only just tied up to the wharf and was in full swing discharging cargo, when he was ordered out again. Being one of the bulldog breed of British skippers, he refused to go, having the natural antipathy of all mercantile skippers for the Admiralty and all its works.

On the way over we had written him a letter of appreciation for the way he had looked after us; and he was fool enough to show this to the Admiral.

“Do you think,” said Chichester, “that because a lot of — silly Australians write you a — silly letter, you are going to disobey my — orders?”

The captain was lucky to escape with his ticket.

Reverting to the horse-hunt: I tried about a dozen places and drew blank every time. Then, on the principle that I would try anything once, I walked into a depot for army horses, though the chance of getting a hunter out of an army depot would only appeal to a super-optimist. One never knows. Hardly had I walked in at the gate, when a groom came forward and said:

“Good day, Mr Paterson.”

I thought, what next? Here was I in a foreign land and a man had arisen up out of the earth that knew

me. It turned out that he was an English groom who had been in Australia and had looked after a racehorse that I had ridden in a race. Thus does fate, when at its very blackest, turn a silver lining!

He said: "I brought these 'orses over from the Argentine and there's some decent sorts in 'em. If you want one to go with the Guv'ment 'Ouse party, I'll sneak one out to you. These officers 'ere is up at the Mount Nelson all their time, and what they don't know, won't 'urt 'em. But you'll have to put 'im on the train yerself. It wouldn't do to let Sir Halfred Milner know you 'ad a guv'ment 'orse."

Next morning at daylight, two men met outside that horse depot. One handed over a good-looking Argentine horse, saddled and bridled. The other handed over a couple of pounds, and the nefarious transaction was complete.

At the train I found men waiting to take my horse, which I handed over with a muttered "Government House", which was a good password anywhere; and, going to the carriage reserved for the Government House party, I found that my two charges for the day were the Duchess of Westminster and Lady Charles Bentinck, no less. Certainly His Excellency, Sir Alfred Milner, had done me pretty well.

Both were young and attractive women, beautifully turned out, and their features had all the repose that marks the caste of Vere de Vere. Both carried whisky and water in hunting-flasks and they both smoked cigarettes—accomplishments which had not, at that time, penetrated to the lower orders. Being handed over to the care of a casual Australian meant nothing in their young lives, in fact I don't think anything on earth could have rattled them. When you are a duchess, you let other people do the worrying.

I was wearing a pair of English-made buckskin breeches, and when the duchess opened the

conversation by saying, "They didn't make those breeches in Australia, did they?", I felt at once that there was not going to be any hauteur or class distinctions on the journey. And when Lady Bentinck followed it up by saying, "I suppose you often ride a hundred miles in a day in Australia, Mr Paterson?" I realized that they looked upon me as the Wild Colonial Boy, the bronco buster from the Barcoo, and I determined to act up to it. It seemed a pity to disappoint them.

At that time, I was a solicitor in practice in Sydney, rarely getting on a horse; but I told them that if I had a horse in Australia that wouldn't carry me a hundred miles in a day, I would give him to a Chinaman to draw a vegetable cart. That appeared to be the stuff to give 'em. Subjects of conversation were rather limited, as they had never been in Australia and I had never been in England. I didn't know anybody they knew, and they didn't know anybody I knew. Such a thing was hardly likely. So we talked about horses, that one unfailing topic of conversation which levels all ranks in every part of the world and is a better passport than any letter of introduction. I asked whether the ladies were riding astride in England and the Duchess said: "No, the grooms say that it will give the horses sore backs." I knew that to be ridiculous, but it didn't seem quite the right time to say so.

Her Grace was good enough to add that there was only one place in England where you could get a good lady's saddle, and it also appeared that there was only one place where you could get a properly-cut lady's habit. I was afterwards to find that, for the English people, there is only one right thing at a time—they are very set in their ways, as the Americans say.

In the Great War there was only one brand of pipe that anyone could smoke without developing an inferiority complex, and the son of the maker of this

pipe was appointed subaltern to a crack regiment. His co-subalterns ragged him about the amount of money his father was making out of the army; and being a somewhat simple youth he asked the Colonel whether he ought to resign.

The Colonel said: "I think your father is doing a very silly thing. He is charging only two pounds for these pipes, when these fools would rather give him a fiver than not have one."

You see, it was the only place where a man could get a pipe.

Returning to our hunt (which, in an indirect way was afterwards to lead me into the Remount Service, otherwise the Horse-hold Hussars) we passed a long railway journey quite cheerfully with biting comments from the ladies on the failures of various members of the British high command.

"They should never have sent him out, my dear. Goodness knows how old he is, and he rouges and wears stays. No wonder he walked his men right straight into a Boer camp, instead of going where he was told. But, of course, he's a great friend of the Prince of Wales."

From these and similar remarks one gathered that, in those good old days, military appointments were like the Order of the Garter—there was no damned merit about them. It was hard for an Australian to understand how the machinery worked; but brother correspondents, including Prior and Hands of the *Daily Mail*, told me that everything in England was run by aristocratic cliques, each clique being headed by some duchess or other.

"They fight like cats over the big jobs," they said, "and the man whose duchess can put in the best work, gets the job." This matriarchal system of conducting a war seemed so unlikely that I thought

the correspondents were making game of my native ignorance. I asked why the newspapers didn't expose the business.

"My dear fellow," was the reply, "if any newspaper proprietor went up against those old Sacred Ibises, they would leave his wife out of everything, and she would soon straighten him up. You haven't been in England, have you? Well, go to England and you'll learn something."

I said that I had already met one duchess, and she seemed to be a very conscientious sort of lady. But the carping democratic spirit would not down.

"Yes," they said, "her husband's a terrific swell, and he had to have some job, so they made him director of remounts. He's a soldier all right, but what does he know about remounts? As much as I know about dancing the Spanish *cachucha* to a pair of castanets."

We had our hunt, in which I was hard put to it to maintain my reputation of a wild-west hero, for I was riding an unconditioned remount amongst first-class English hunters. But, by nursing my unfortunate Argentine as much as possible, and by the simple expedient of following the tracks when I got thrown out, I managed to keep the Australian flag flying. As Mr Jorrocks says: "A young man would sooner 'ave a himputation on 'is morality than on 'is 'ossmanship."

After a good hunt we ran the jackal to earth; and the ladies sat and smoked without blinking an eyelid while a Dutch farmer, under the impression that he was airing his English, used the most frightful language while digging the animal out.

Later on, when I had picked up my own horses at the front, I met the Duke of Teck, director of remounts. I found him to be a carefree sportsman who knew

quite a lot about horses, but was a bit casual as to details and organization. Seeing me one day riding a big Australian mare, he said: "Here, you Australian fella, I want that mare for a general. How much do you want for her?"

Seeing that he could have commandeered the mare or fixed the price himself, he gave me a fair deal. When I said that I wanted thirty-five guineas for her, he amused himself by acting the horsecoper.

"I think she's blind," he said, walking up to the mare and making a swipe at her with his hat, which caused her nearly to jump from under me. Then he fixed his eyes on a small bump on one of her forelegs.

"I don't like the fetlock," he said. "I think she's just starting to go there. If I buy her for a general and she can't retreat fast enough and he gets captured what are they going to say about me?"

As the mare, though old, was thoroughbred and perfectly sound, I offered to ride her up a kopje, and retreat down it faster than any general's horse in the British Army. So after making a sort of prizefighter's swing at her ribs to test her wind, he handed me a cheque and told me to deliver the mare straight away at the depot. This I did—and luckily for myself got a receipt for her.

Next day, in the Bloemfontein Club, crowded with officers, I was hailed across the room by His Highness, as follows:

"Hey, you Australian horse-thief, what did you do with that mare? I paid you for her and you never delivered her."

"I did deliver her. I've got the receipt in my pocket."

"Well, you stole her out again, then. She's not there now."

This accusation of horse-stealing was, of course, partly due to my having passed myself off as a wild untamed Australian, and partly to the all-round reputation that the Australians had made for themselves from the moment they arrived.

“You’ve got the mare and the money too, I expect. Come now, didn’t you steal her out of the depot again?”

I assured him that I hadn’t taken the mare, as I could get all the Boer ponies I wanted, on the veldt.

“Well,” he said, “some damned general must have seen her in there and got her out before my man had a chance at her. These generals growl all the time about their horses, and when I do get them a good horse, they expect me to sit in the dirt and hold it for them till they like to come for it. Never take a remount job, Paterson. I’ve issued ten thousand horses since I’ve been here, and, if you ask the army, I haven’t issued one good one.”

But if the remounts were the untouchables of the army, at any rate, they gave the world a new word. The big depot for the army was at Stellenbosch; and when any general marched his men east when he should have gone west, or arrived a day too late for a fight, old Lord Roberts would promptly order him to leave his command and go to Stellenbosch and take charge of the remount depot. That, as they used to say in the bush, would learn him; and it gave to the world the expression “Stellenbosched”.

Lord Roberts, who attended to all the Stellenbosching, was not only a Commander-in-Chief, he was a dictator. Such men as French and Kitchener had been subalterns when he was a major, and, like the mother who can never believe that her children have grown up, the old man could never realize that these fellows were really generals. Calm-eyed, unhurried, knowing his job from A to Z, he

strafed the big men and sent the lesser men to Stellenbosch. The reader will perhaps have gathered by this time that the old man regarded the command of a remount depot as a punishment.

I was to have the honour of meeting the old man later on and to find that he ran the war as a one-man job, taking no advice from anybody. All unessential details he left to his wife and two daughters; which may have had some bearing on the fact that Roberts's staff were nearly all titled men (very eligible), while French's staff, apart from Haig and a few professional soldiers, were more financial than aristocratic. Johannesburg Jews of the richer sort got on to French's staff as intelligence officers; English ironmasters without any military training were given jobs on the staff as inspectors of things in general. So long as the man at the top was all right, things seemed to go swimmingly. Did not the great Duke of Wellington once complain that he had been sent two staff officers, of whom one was a lunatic and the other a chronic invalid? And still he won the war!

Chapter 2

Winston Churchill

Winston in embryo—Army's opinion of him—More feared than liked—His brush with General French—The world's greatest advertiser—Ability and swagger—Relief of Kimberley—Rhodes and Kekewich were quarrelling—French makes a speech—Alexander of Teck as an officer.

A war-correspondent, in army eyes, is an evil to be tolerated, in fact he is distinctly nah-poo, as we used afterwards to say in France. Being an Australian, a steeplechase rider and polo player, I had a (possibly fictitious) reputation as a judge of a horse, and was constantly asked to go and pick horses for officers out of the remount depots.

In that way I got to know such celebrities as Lord Roberts, French, Haig, Winston Churchill and Kipling, and I attained a status in the army that I would never have reached as a correspondent. The horse may be the natural enemy of man, as some people think, but he is the key to more valuable acquaintanceships and good friendships than either rank or riches. I acquired more merit in the army by putting a cavalry regiment on to back the Australian horse The Grafter, in the City and Suburban, than by the finest dispatches that I ever sent to Reuter's. Generals, as a rule, were "off" correspondents. If they were civil to them it looked as though they were trying to advertise, and if they treated them roughly—well, the correspondents had their own way of getting back at them. One miscreant, a correspondent for an obscure Cape paper, was stopped by a railway staff officer, named King Hall, from going somewhere or other. Probably King Hall was quite right—but look what the correspondent did to him!

He printed an article in his sausage-wrap of a paper to say that, from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, from his immaculately-fitting tunic to his beautifully-cut riding-pants and his spotless boots, King Hall was *beau sabreur*, the sartorial ideal of a British officer.

How did the army eat it up!

Wandering generals would get off the train, poke their heads into King Hall's office and say: "Well, how's the *beau sabreur* to-day?" Colonels on lines of communication, having little else to do, would ride up to the railway station and inquire of King Hall who made his breeches. Even subalterns, who dared not "chip" a senior officer, would look meaningfully under the table at those boots, as they departed with their railway warrants. If King Hall had been made press censor, every correspondent in South Africa

would have been sent home by the next day's boat—unless there was one leaving earlier.

Not that all the correspondent fraternity were casteless in the eyes of the army. *The Times* staff, headed by Lionel James, were persons of consequence. With the English passion for regimentation, they all wore a tooth-brush stuck in the band of their hats, as a sort of caste mark. If you were a *Times* man you wore a tooth-brush; if you were not a *Times* man you didn't dare do it. No, sir!

Winston Churchill (afterwards to be, well, pretty well everything in British governments) was over as correspondent for the *Morning Post*. With his great social influence, his aggressiveness and undoubted ability, he was a man to be feared if not liked. He would even take a fall out of General French; and that, for a correspondent, was about equal to earning the V.C. twice over. One day, when something had gone wrong and Johnnie French was in a particularly bad temper, Churchill said to me:

“Come along up to H.Q. I am going to give French a turn. He was very rude to me last time we met.”

On that particular day I would as soon have faced a Hyrcanian tiger, and said so. But Churchill insisted. So off we went, Churchill striding along in front with his chin well stuck out, while I shuffled protestingly behind. Arrived at headquarters, Churchill saluted and said:

“General,” he said, “I want to ask whether I am to report to-day's operations as a success or a failure?”

FRENCH (choking down a few appropriate words that he would have liked to say): “Well, Churchill, that depends on how you look at it.”

CHURCHILL: “I am afraid that my point of view would not carry much weight, sir. What I want to

know is, whether from your point of view, the affair was a success or a failure?”

FRENCH (very dignified): “If you apply to Major Haig, he will let you see the official report. Good morning.”

It was a victory for the Press, but one felt that a few such victories would mean annihilation. Churchill was not then in parliament—in fact, he had been hooted and badly defeated at his only attempt; but he expounded his plan of campaign.

“This correspondent job,” he explained, “is nothing to me; but I mean to get into parliament through it. They wouldn’t listen to me when I put up for parliament, because they had never heard of me. Now,” he said, “I am going to plaster the *Morning Post* with cables about our correspondent, Mr Winston Churchill, driving an armoured train, or pointing out to Lord Roberts where the enemy is. When I go up for parliament again, I’ll fly in.”

All of which things he did. Persons burdened with inferiority complexes might sit up and take notice.

Churchill was the most curious combination of ability and swagger. The army could neither understand him nor like him; for when it came to getting anywhere or securing any job, he made his own rules. Courage he had in plenty, as will be shown later on; but, like the Duke of Plaza Toro, he felt that he should always travel with a full band. As one general put it:

“You never know when you have got Churchill. You can leave him behind in charge of details and he’ll turn up at the front, riding a camel, and with some infernal explanation that you can’t very well fault.”

Even his work as a correspondent jarred the army to its depths. When there was nothing doing at the

front, he always managed to get himself into the news. The Duke of Norfolk's horse fell with him in an ant-bear hole (everybody's horse fell with him in an ant-bear hole at some time or other) and the matter was too trivial for comment. But the *Morning Post*, when it arrived, had a splash heading: "Our Mr Winston Churchill saves the Duke of Norfolk from being crushed by his horse." As the Duke of Norfolk was the great Catholic peer, Churchill no doubt reckoned that this would be worth thousands of Catholic votes to him at the next election.

Churchill and his cousin, the Duke of Marlborough, each drank a big bottle of beer for breakfast every morning—an unholy rite that is the prerogative of men who have been to a certain school or college. It was like *The Times* tooth-brush or the I Zingari colours—only the elect dare use it.

Marlborough, by the way, was just as retiring as Churchill was aggressive. He could not get much higher than the House of Lords, so he had no necessity to advertise himself; but he was a duke, so he had to act up to it when under public observation. He was riding one day on the flank of an Australian patrol, when it was found that the Boer bullets, fired at extreme range, were just about able to reach the patrol. The common or garden Australians swerved hurriedly out of danger; but the Duke rode on impassively, while the bullets whipped up the sand in front of and behind his horse. Said an Australian trooper:

"If I had that bloke's job, I wouldn't do that."

Churchill, on the other hand, had such a strong personality that even in those early days, when he was quite a young man, the army were prepared to bet that he would either get into jail or become Prime Minister. He had done some soldiering; but he had an uncanny knack of antagonizing his superior and inferior officers. As he said himself:

“I could see nothing in soldiering except looking after the horses’ backs and the men’s mess-tins in barracks. There’s not enough wars to make soldiering worth while.”

The soldiers tried to retaliate by stirring him up in their own crude way. Once, when he went as a subaltern in charge of some expedition, they sent him a wire:

“Don’t make a bigger fool of yourself than you can help.” But, trying to get through the hide of the pachydermatous Churchill with a telegram, was like shooting “old man rhinossyhoss” with paper darts.

Here are some extracts from a diary of this march:

At the Modder River—There was a camp of tents extending for miles and miles, as far as one could see for the dust. The horses were dying of cold and of dust on the lungs, and the men were dying of enteric. Left this place and joined in with French’s force on the march to Kimberley. We passed seven miles of mule- and bullock-wagons. A staff captain—a V.C. man at that—came up and said he had lost touch of the whole of the supply-wagons for a certain brigade. We asked him how many wagons there were.

He said: “There ought to be a few miles of it. There are three thousand five hundred mules, besides a lot of bullock-wagons.” This trifling item was absolutely lost and swallowed up in the mass of mounted men, wagons and guns.

Passed some infantry that had been on the march for days and were pretty well exhausted. It was pitiful to see them, half delirious with heat and thirst, dropping out of the ranks and throwing themselves down in the sun, often too far gone to shelter their heads from the sun, but letting their helmets roll off and lie beside them.

Crossed Reit River and camped, moving off at eight next morning. Here we dropped all infantry, all transport, and all convoys. This was French's force for the relief of Kimberley, a force of five thousand, all cavalry and horse artillery, all the squadrons moving abreast across the open veldt. We had three days' rations; no horse feed; and no chance of getting water at the end of the march, unless we could drive the Boers away from the Modder River, which we were to strike at the end of the day. The Boers had fired the grass, and we moved through smoke and dust and blinding heat. The Scot's Greys were next to us and were well mounted; but their big English horses were not standing it as well as our leathery walers. The gun-horses were dropping in their harness. Every here and there along the line a pistol-shot rang out, telling where some good horse had been dispatched to put him out of misery. Horses and men were about all in, when we reached the Modder; and there was no need to order the troops to clear the Boers off the crossing. The horses just simply bolted for the water; if the Boers had tried to stop them they would have run over them.

Next day we moved on for Kimberley. Very strict orders—no transport to accompany troops. Our two mule-wagon Kaffirs, Henry and Alick, with teams of six mules each, had somehow managed to dodge the provost marshal on the first day, and joined us in camp. For the second day the quartermaster told them that they must not accompany the troops, but that they could follow us to Kimberley if they liked. Hardly had we moved off, when we saw Henry and Alick hustling along with the best, shoving their teams in before the R.H.A., or the Household Cavalry, or anybody else.

Henry is very black. His principal points are a pair of black puttees and a broken ostrich-plume, which he wears in his hat. The white plume in the helmet of Navarre was not watched with half as much interest as the ostrich-feather of Henry, the Kaffir, on this

march. If Henry could keep up, we might have something to eat next day; if not, or if the provost got him, we might have to do a perish for two or three days. Whether we trotted or cantered, Henry, with his team of six little game mules, was scuttling along at our heels.

When the artillery halted on a rise to breathe their horses, Henry swung his team in among them, and the provost must have seen him. Just at that moment, however, the Boers opened on that ridge with a very big gun. Squadrons wheeled right and left, and the gunners swung round like machines. But nothing on the ridge swung round quicker than Henry and Alick swung their respective teams, and nothing got out of danger faster. The quartermaster said:

“I was afraid the guns or the cavalry would run over those boys; but nothing in the army would run over them with guns behind them.”

That march to Kimberley was a sort of baptism of fire for my future career as a remount officer, as I saw all sorts of troop and transport animals thoroughly tried out. It was the first time I had seen muleteams in any number, but later on I was to have thousands of mules through my hands. Luckily, I didn't know it.

After the march, I asked Colonel Haig (afterwards Field-Marshal and Commander-in-Chief in France, of whom more anon) which lot of horses had come out of the test with the greatest percentage of efficient.

“Of all people,” he said, “who do you think have the most horses fit to move on again if wanted?—The Tinbellies.”

The Tinbellies are the Life Guards, whose magnificent black horses are seen on sentry duty

outside the palaces in London, and the general estimate of the Tinbellies was that they were chocolate soldiers; they were too decorative to be very destructive: and yet they had come out on top, after one of the most trying marches in history. It was incredible. I told him I thought their horses were too big and too pampered to stand this sort of job.

“Well,” he said, “anyone would think so. But they’re in great condition, and they’re very strong—they can hump the weight. Anyhow, there you are. If I have to send a squadron to clear the Boers off the hills, I’ll have to send Her Majesty’s Life Guards after them. Bit of a compliment to Johannes Paul Kruger, isn’t it?”

French and Haig would have made good poker players. Neither success nor defeat wreathed any smiles on their mask-like faces, or cut any lines on their brows. Here at Kimberley, with a howling, shrieking, cheering crowd, almost pulling them off their horses, and trying to kiss their very boots, as they rode along, everything looked set for a bit of theatricals. But it turned out that Kekewich, the military commander, and Cecil Rhodes, the civilian despot, had quarrelled bitterly and had gone out in separate directions to meet French and get in first with their hard-luck stories.

French was officially received by a Jewish gentleman, who probably owned a diamond-mine, and his opening sentence was: “Veil, general, vy didn’t you come before?”

French was never a good mixer at any time and, according to all reports, he was particularly unenthusiastic about the un-lost tribes. Like the great Duke of Marlborough, his troubles through life had been mostly female and financial. It must be admitted that the world owes a great deal to the Jewish race; French at one time and another had

owed them a good deal, too. He made a brief, halting speech, punctuated with sips of champagne:

“Very glad to be here (sip); had a hard march (sip); hope everything will go well now (sip); must go and see about refitting (sip); when Colonel Kekewich comes back, let me know.” With that he finished the fizz and bolted off.

One pauses to think how differently Baden Powell would have handled such an opportunity.

Kimberley—Day after relief. Went round and saw the wreckage of transport and troop animals. Horses that have collapsed through heat and overwork are being shot in all directions. The people here have been living on horseflesh and thousands of starving Kaffirs are hanging round the lines. When a horse is shot, they fling themselves on it like a crowd of vultures, and in ten minutes there is not a scrap left. My friend, the Duke of Teck, will have to step lively to keep this column supplied with horses, as they have to be led up, and there is every chance of their being cut off by the enemy. I never knew there was a remount service before this war. It has its hands full now.

Our mule-drivers, Henry and Alick, are the only two boys to get up with their officers' wagons, as the English cavalry officers obeyed orders strictly and would not let their boys come along. We are the only officers' mess that have food and blankets. Prince Alexander of Teck, a subaltern with the Inniskillings, didn't even have an overcoat. He wouldn't take anything from us, as he said it wasn't playing the game to take anything while his mates were doing a perish. Later on, he was attached to our Australian Lancer squadron and was a good soldier. One of our newly-arrived Australian officers asked him what he would do and what orders he would give, if he found his command surrounded by Boers.

"I would lie flat down on my guts," he said. There was no theatricalism about Alexander of Teck.

Henry and Alick are the heroes of the local Kaffir population. They drew some money to-day, and as Henry was on duty he gave his share to Alick to buy some dop, a very villainous kind of Cape brandy. Alick fell in with a crowd of hero-worshippers, and among them they drank all Henry's dop. Alick also lost all Henry's money playing the Kaffir equivalent for baccara. At lunch-time the quartermaster heard a fearful row in the lines and arrived just in time to prevent Henry (much the bigger man) from choking Alick to death. He had them separated and put to work at different ends of the line, Alick with tears streaming down his face, saying: "One more chance, quartermaster, one more chance. He kickit my mules." In ten minutes they were at it again and a sentry with a loaded rifle had to be put over Henry, while Alick was sent out of the lines. Henry, crying with rage and sobriety, begged the sentry to shoot him right through the heart, otherwise nothing would stop him from killing Alick at the first opportunity.

By nightfall they were firm friends again. Handling native transport drivers is one of the things they don't teach in the books.

July 28th, 1900—Caledon Valley, South Africa—Day of Prinsloo's surrender. The men we caught were like sheep without a shepherd. They had moved up the valley, hoping to get out at Naauwpoort Nek, and when we blocked them they fell into a disorganized rabble. Each commandant took his own course. They had forced their guns and wagons up rocks and down fathomless abysses, along sidelings and across gullies till they could not extricate themselves. They had thousands of cattle and sheep with them, and the winding road—if road you could call it—for miles up the valley was one long bewildering string of ex-wagons, Cape carts, cattle, sheep, horses, armed

men, women, children and Kaffirs. They couldn't get off the road. They could go neither backward nor forward without our permission. They could have left their wagons and gone over the mountains on horseback, but, as Roux, the fighting parson, put it—the Boers love their wagons more than their fatherland.

All the first day the fighting men trooped in, and they brought a fair number of Cape carts with them, in fact we were surprised to see that each commando had as many private carts as one of our crack cavalry regiments. The next day we found out that, on the previous day we hadn't, comparatively speaking, seen any carts at all.

On the second day we saw miles and miles of carts—driven by fat old Rip Van Winkles, with white hair streaming down their backs; driven by dandified young Boers with peaked braids and tailor-made clothes; driven by grinning Kaffirs: some drawn by horses, some by mules, and some by oxen. Hour after hour, they streamed in, till we began to think that the Boers must be driving them through our camp round the hill and back again, like a pantomime army in a theatre.

I had an interview with the fighting parson, Roux. He blamed Prinsloo for surrendering. Said that, at the very time the fight was going on, an election was being held to decide whether he or Prinsloo should be commandant!

Well, we did some silly things ourselves, but nothing quite as bad as that.

Chapter 3

Lord Roberts, French, Haig, and Others

The Grand Old Man—Soldiering at seventy—Interview in his Night-shirt—Earl Derby as a censor—Typical John

Bull—First meeting with Kipling—Kitchener and the
Picadilly generals—Hair and guts in African armies—
Douglas Haig opens door of fame

Still harping on our celebrities, here are a few close-ups of the men who would have been on the films, if there had been any talkies at that time.

February 1900—Outside Cronje's laager. Saw Lord Roberts for the first time. He came to our hospital to inspect some new style of tents we had brought over, and which are supposed to be better than the regulation tents. A very small, grizzled old man—they say he is seventy—but he sits his horse like a youngster. Though he is studiously polite to everybody, he has broken several generals already, so the brass hats and the red-collared popinjays of staff officers are wondering, when they go to bed at night, whether their jobs will be gone in the morning.

Kipling says of "Bobs" that he does not advertise. Well, he met another non-advertiser to-day. Colonel Fiaschi, in charge of our hospital, is a long, gaunt Italian, a celebrated surgeon, and a regular fanatic for hard work. When Roberts came, Fiaschi was operating. Ninety-nine hospital commanders out of a hundred would have handed over the job to a subordinate, and would have gone round with the great man. Not so Fiaschi. He came to the door of the tent with his hands all over blood and said:

"You must excuse me, my lord. I am very busy."

"You are quite right, sir," said Roberts. "Go on with your work. I will come round another time, if you will let me know when it will suit you."

Later on, Fiaschi, with a couple of orderlies, was out looking for wounded in a fog, and blundered right on to an outlying Boer trench.

“Come on, you men,” said Fiaschi, “you have no chance. Give me your rifles.”

The Boers, thinking he had the whole British Army behind him, handed over their rifles, and Fiaschi brought them in. This was reported to Roberts. A staff officer who handed in the report told me that the old man said at once:

“Was not that the officer who refused to come round because he was operating? Give him a D.S.O.”

And a D.S.O. it was.

May 14th—Kroonstadt. Rode in with Lord Roberts’s staff. The niggers think that this war is a free-for-all, now that the Boers are on the run. They started to loot the Boer hospital, carrying out bedding, food, etc, on their heads. They picked the wrong time. Just as they came streaming out of the hospital, Lord Roberts and his staff rode past. Without raising his voice the old man just crooked his finger to a staff officer and said:

“Put the Lancers on to them.” The Lancers escort jumped their horses in over the low wall, prodded our coloured brothers in the stern with the lances, and the hospital gear went back in quick time.

May 30th—Outside Johannesburg. Went with a dispatch rider from French’s force on the west of Johannesburg to Lord Roberts’s force on the east. Arrived about 3 a.m., and handed dispatches to a staff officer. Lord Roberts was sleeping on a little stretcher in a back room and came out in his night-shirt to look at them. He doesn’t spare himself, seventy years and all as he is. He marked each dispatch for the proper staff officer in the same unhurried, methodical way in which he gave the Lancers the orders to stab the niggers. Like Goethe’s hero, he works without haste and without rest. The dispatch officer introduced me as an Australian

correspondent; and the old man, standing there in his night-shirt, with the weight of the campaign on his shoulders, found time to ask me how the Australians with French were getting on.

“When I first saw the Australians,” he said, “I thought they were too untrained to be of much use. But the work I have given them to do is the best proof of what I think of them now.”

I told him that the only thing the Australians wanted was more horses. He said:

“That’s what everybody wants—more horses.” Then, to the staff officer, “Make a note of that. Stir up the remount people and let me know what they are doing.” He then said: “Did you see many Boers retreating north as you came across to-night? Were they moving wagons and guns?”

We replied we had seen plenty, hundreds and hundreds of them, travelling in the dark, or camped by the roadside. Told him that Colonel Pilcher had captured a Boer gun after the dispatches were written. (As a matter of fact, we had left Pilcher sitting on the gun lest, as he said, some damned senior officer would come up and claim the credit of having captured it. “I’m not going to have any mistake about who captured this gun,” said Pilcher.)

The old man rubbed his chin, thoughtfully, and said, “One gun! Well that’s something.” It was well known in the army that the old man had been giving French a very rough time for not getting round ahead of the Boers and capturing their wagons and guns, at half a dozen different places.

Winston Churchill came through the same night with dispatches for his paper; he had the daring to ride right through Johannesburg on his bicycle. The town was full of Boers drowning the sorrows of their retreat in drink. If they had recognized him, they

would most likely have shot him, as they were a bit out of hand, and he had written some things that they bitterly resented. One must hand it to this Churchill that he has pluck.

March 25th 1900—Bloemfontein. Met Kipling. He has come up here on a hurried visit, partly to see what a war is really like after writing so much about soldiers, and partly in search of health after his late severe illness.

He is a little, square-built, sturdy man of about forty. His face is well enough known to everybody from his numerous portraits; but no portrait gives any hint of the quick, nervous energy of the man. His talk is a gabble, a chatter, a constant jumping from one point to another. In manner, he is more like a business man than a literary celebrity. There is nothing of the dreamer about him. The last thing anyone could believe is that the little, square-figured man with the thick black eyebrows and the round glasses, is the creator of Mowgli, the Jungle Boy; of *The Drums of the Fore and Aft*; of *The Man who would be King*; to say nothing of Mulvaney, Ortheris and Learoyd, and other celebrities. He talked of little but the war and its results, present and prospective. His residence in America has Americanized his language, and he says “yep” instead of “yes”.

After talking a little while about Australian books and Australian papers, he launched out on what is evidently his ruling idea at present—the future of South Africa.

“I’m off to London,” he says. “Booked to sail on the eleventh. I’m not going to wait for the fighting here. I can trust the army to do all the fighting. I knew this war was coming and I came over here some time ago, and I went to Johannesburg and Pretoria. I’ve got everything good and ready. There’s going to be the greatest demand for skilled labour here the world has ever known. Railways, irrigation, mines,

mills, everything would have started here long ago only for this government. The world can't afford to let the Boers have this country to sleep in any longer."

I said that our men did not think the country worth fighting over; that it would not pay to farm unless one were sure of water.

"Water. You can get water at forty feet anywhere. What more do they want?"

I said that there was a vast difference between artesian water which rises to the surface and well water which has to be lifted forty feet. When it comes to watering 100,000 sheep, one finds the difference.

"Well," he said, "that may be so in this Karroo desert. But you haven't seen the best of the country yet. Wait till you get to the Transvaal."

"If you take the country," I said, "what will you do with the Boers?"

"Give'em back their farms. But we'll show them how to run the country as it should be run. They don't know what a grand country they have got."

There spoke the idealist and the theorist. That was over thirty years ago and the great rush of skilled labour has not happened yet.

I was amazed at his cock-sureness; for I felt certain that I knew more about land settlement than did Kipling, and I would have hesitated about telling the Boers how to run their country. Then I remembered that he had been for years on the editorial staff of a big Indian newspaper. Once a man has been privileged to use the editorial "we" he feels that the world is out of joint, and that he is born to set it right. Remember Dickens's editor who said: "Let us

remind the Emperor of Turkey that we have got our eye on him.”

Kipling is two men—a sort of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. I sat next to him at dinner one night, and he put off the toga of the politician and put on the mantle of the author. It was most fascinating. He yarned away about shoes and ships and sealing-wax and cabbages and kings; interested in everything; asking questions about everything; jumping from one subject to another, from his residence in New York to border battles on the Indian frontier; from the necessity of getting your local colour right, to the difficulty of getting a good illustrator. As he spoke, his face lit up and you began to notice the breadth of his head and the development of the bump of perception over his eyes. His training as a journalist may have made him a bit of an adviser-general to the world at large, but it taught him to talk to anybody and to listen to anybody, for the sake of whatever story they might have to tell. You could have dumped Kipling down in a splitter’s camp in the back-blocks of Australia and he would have been quite at home; and would have gone away, leaving the impression that he, was a decent sort of bloke that asked a lot of questions.

I asked him how he got all his material, and he said:

“Some of it I saw; some of it I was. As for the rest—I asked questions.” Later on, I was to stay with Kipling in England and to see more of this many-sided character.

March 29th—Outside Bloemfontein. Met Hector Macdonald, the fighting Scotch “Tommy” who rose to be a general and afterwards passed into limbo. One of the world’s great soldiers gone wrong. I had expected to see a dour, hard-faced Presbyterian sort of general, with the brand of the sergeant-major all over him. Instead of this, I saw quite a young-looking, pleasant-faced man with quick eyes, mobile

mouth, and a general expression of light-heartedness; a man with a devil-may-care look in his eye, as if he would fight a policeman on the least provocation and think nothing of it. He yarned away about the Australians at a great rate, and obviously thinks our troops are as good as any for the work here. He looked young enough to be Lord Roberts's son. He must be a wonder to have risen from the ranks to the position he holds, while still so young a man. Macdonald is as little of the "Muckle Sandie" — the typical Scot—as any man I have ever seen. A genius in his own line, he shared the fate of that other great genius, Oscar Wilde.

At the same time met Kitchener. As far as mobility of expression goes, you could put Kitchener's face on the body of the Sphinx, and nobody would know the difference. He has the aloof air and the fixed expression of a golf champion. His staff say that he is all right when you know him, but you've got to know him first. They say that he has some humour concealed about him, and that he is a collector and is fond of literature. Perhaps he is like Thomas Bracken's hero, "not understood". He is taking over from Lord Roberts and will have a thankless job, as the English are sick of the war. There is a lot of jealousy in the army—in any army. The Piccadilly generals say that Kitchener is only a nigger-fighter, well enough when the enemy will rush at him and try to stab him with a spear, but not exactly the man that they—the Piccadilly generals—would have selected for the job of catching De Wet.

As a matter of fact, De Wet nearly caught him. K. of K. was with a force that was guarding lines of communication, so far from the fighting-line that the men were laying out a football ground; putting whitewashed stones round their tents, and thinking of marrying and settling down. Kitchener was occupying a house at some distance from the main body. The next thing was that De Wet's men raided this outfit, galloping up to the lines in the darkness

and shooting off their horses into the camp. If they had known that Kitchener was in that house, they must have got him. As it was the great K. of K. came running at full speed into the main camp, shouting, "Buller, Buller", every ten yards. "Buller" was the countersign for the night, and Kitchener thought it as well to let the pickets know that he was not a Boer coming along in such a hurry.

Some Boer Generals

March 18th 1900—At Wessell's farm, outside Bloemfontein. We are moved out here probably to keep our troops from getting into mischief in the town. This is the best bit of country we have seen in Africa. We are camped on a high ridge, which is (like nearly all the rest of Africa that we have seen) perfectly bare of trees. The grass is knee-deep, almost exactly like our kangaroo-grass. Below is a flat of about six hundred acres covered with maize, growing very well, and about eight feet high. All among the maize there are thousands of melons—water-melons, rock-melons, pie-melons—and pumpkins; the fruit is so thick that a horse can hardly avoid smashing it as we ride through the rows of corn. From this ridge, at least six houses are in sight, each with its dam of water, its mass of willows and poplars, and its fruit garden. The soil is a rich red loam; and the grass is so good that horses, when turned loose to graze, hardly move ten yards from the same spot. The owners of these farms, and their farmhands, are the Boers of whose uncivilized ignorance we have heard so much. They have the latest air-meter windmills, they use the springs of water to the best advantage in irrigation, and in the town we can get anything that could be got in an Australian town of similar size.

If one goes to these outlying farms, the man of the house is always away on commando, but the Afrikaner woman is as a rule the exact counterpart of the girl of any Australian country town. They are

great on tennis—nearly every farm has its tennis-court. They have their little assembly balls; and one clique does not mix with the other clique, just as in Australia. In peace time they go to Johannesburg for balls and races and so forth. Now they go to the hospitals and act as nurses. When they were besieging Ladysmith, the wives and daughters and sweethearts of the burghers used to go down from Heidelberg by excursion train every Saturday and hold a kind of picnic. Old Piet Joubert found them such a nuisance that he forbade any women coming down, except nurses. Then they all put red crosses on their arms and went as nurses—more nurses than patients—till even the nurses were not allowed to go down. When we cleared the Boers out of Heidelberg, all these women rolled up to our hospital and started nursing the sick Tommies with just as much interest as their own men. The Boers have been fighting all through their history and they take war as they find it.

Outside Thabanchu—Went with two celebrated civil surgeons, Drs MacCormick and Scot Skirving, with an ambulance to pick up a wounded man. Rode round a kopje and found ourselves right in the middle of a Boer commando. Great chance to see how they campaigned.

We saw a lot of rough, dirty, bearded men, just like a crowd of shearers or farm-hands, as no doubt most of them were. Each man was leading a pony and carrying a rifle. The rifle was the only thing neat and workmanlike about them. Their clothes were poor, ready-made slops; their hats every kind of battered old felt; their saddles were wretched things, worn out of shape. No two men were dressed alike; they were all ages, all sizes and all classes; all were dirty, with rough, unshaven faces. But we did not take much notice of that, as campaigning is not clean work, and we ourselves had not had our clothes off for a week. They had no Cape carts, as they were too near our forces and might have to clear out at a

moment's notice. They didn't send quartermasters to draw their rations or their forage or anything like that. Each man led his horse up to the barn and came out with a bundle of horse forage under his arm. Then they drew off to camp in little groups. Each had a blanket on his saddle. Some had a white blanket, some blue, some red, and some had gaudy-coloured rugs. Each man was his own ordnance, supply, and remount department.

A boy of fifteen years of age, who could speak English, was sent with us to find the wounded man. A talkative youngster, chattering away volubly. He took himself very seriously, as boys of that age are apt to do. We asked him how long the Boers would go on fighting. He struck an attitude and said:

"Till the last Afrikander is killed. If there is only he and I left," he went on, touching the man next him, "we will fight till we are both killed and then you will have the land. Till then, no."

He was evidently a youngster of some position in life, and the two men with him were his followers in some way, his farm-hands, probably. They seemed to be half amused at, and half proud of his tall talk. I asked him his name, and he said something that sounded like "Verry," but it may have been "Fourie."

"I am a wonderful fellow," he said. "I cannot miss a man up to eight hundred yards. The English are brave enough, but they cannot shoot. Ah, this man-shooting is difficult. Buck-shooting is easy, but the buck does not fire back."

"In the first part of this war," he said, "we suffered too much from hair and guts."

Asked to explain this cryptic statement, he said:

"All our generals were old men, fat men with big beards. They had fought Zulus, and we thought they

could fight a war, but they could not handle big numbers of men. A hunting-party, yes; but a war, no. Now we have trained men, like Botha, and we will do better. Cronje was one of the old generals, and we have better fighting generals than Cronje. We are with General Olivier and he is very good.”

When one comes to think of it, a lot of Boer generals had French-sounding names, such as Olivier, Cellier, Du Toit, Du Plessis, etc.—probably descendants of French Huguenots.

This boy let us look into the General’s headquarters. About a dozen large, hairy Boers were sitting round the room, smoking silently. A little girl was nursing a baby in a corner. A teapot and cups were on the table. It reminded one of the pictures of the “Cotter’s Saturday Night,” in Burns’s poems.

We picked up the wounded man, and the boy saw us out of their lines. On parting, he said: “I hope to meet you again, but I do not want to be a prisoner and have to go to Capetown and catch fish. If I do go there, and they give me a line, I will catch all the fish.”

This fish-catching business is the one Boer joke. When Lord Roberts accepted the surrender of a big number of men, he remarked on the absence of wounded, and the Boers said, “We sent them away, because they don’t like fish.” Then they all laughed.

Lord Roberts, who is a serious-minded man and was not in the joke, looked at them in a puzzled sort of way. He wondered what fish had to do with it, until his staff explained that every Boer expected (if made a prisoner) to be sent to an island to catch fish till the war was over.

During all this fighting French and Haig did all the cavalry work and were among the few generals that ever really got in touch with the enemy. Other

generals only saw the tails of their horses retreating round a hill. French was like the cat who walked by himself—preferably on the tiles—he had little to say to anybody. In temperament he was like a fox-terrier, always ready to attack the nearest enemy. It was lucky for him that he had the cool, clear-headed Haig at his elbow. Otherwise, he might have walked into a disaster or two that would have left some other general to command the British army in France in the Great War.

As the Tommies put it: “Haig carried French’s brains.”

French would take one look at a position and say:

“I think we’ll go up here, Douglas.”

But Haig would say: “I think that’s the centre of their position, sir. Suppose we send a patrol up these hills on the right, and get the beggars to shoot a bit. Then we’ll know where they are.”

Like Carlyle’s genius, Haig had the capacity to take infinite pains. His instructions were always clear and distinct, and he meant them to be obeyed. As to his appearance, everybody has seen thousands of photos of Haig. Probably no man in the world ever got so much publicity. A very square-chinned man, with a broad forehead, he might have made a great public-school teacher, or a great judge. He gave the impression of being a very earnest man, who took things seriously. In this he differed from French, whose face had not a wrinkle on it, and who took all things as they came, especially women. Both had clear eyes and clear complexions, thus conforming to the dictum of General Dan Tucker, who said that a man needed good guts to get anywhere in the army.

Luckily for me, Haig had been in Australia, where I had seen him play polo. After examining my

credentials, he said:

“Now, look here. I ought to send you round to army headquarters and let them decide whether you are to stay or not, but I’ll let you stop here on this understanding. Everything you write has to be censored by me. If you try to send anything away that isn’t censored, then you’ll be sent away. You’ve got to play the game. You mustn’t go anywhere, or do anything, without getting the proper permission. Sometimes the wires are crowded; then each correspondent is allowed to send so many words and no more. One man sent a message in the morning and another message in the afternoon; but we found it out and he has been sent away. Don’t try to be too clever, and you’ll get along all right.”

Haig explained the duties and powers of a war correspondent by saying: “You can come out with the staff and see anything that’s going on. If you want any information, come to me and I’ll tell you—if I have time. Don’t worry the General. He’s not at his best with correspondents any time, and he might say something you didn’t like. Let him alone and he’ll let you alone. We’re going out in the morning and you can come along if you like.”

When the staff moved out next morning it consisted of the General and his brigade major; a young officer with red tabs, to gallop about with messages and orders; a signalling officer; the staff representatives of the medical and artillery services; half a dozen foreign attachés, who were allowed to accompany the war to see how Britain’s army stood comparison with their own; several wealthy Jews, who had been hunted out of Johannesburg by the war and somehow got on to French’s staff as intelligence officers; and a few dispirited war correspondents, who reckoned that nothing was going to happen. Sometimes things happened; more often they didn’t.

Army officers are like cricketers in that they are given their innings. If they make one bad stroke and get caught, they are out—and they very seldom get a second innings. Scores of men are ready to step into their places, and the army has no mercy for failures. If French and Haig had fallen down on their job in South Africa, the history of the world might have been different. As it was, they managed to carry their bats out, against tricky bowling, and were due to go in first for the British Army when the Great War came on.

Chapter 4

Lord Derby

Potential Prime Minister—Breeder of Derby winners—Churchill and Lord Derby—Racing and hunting—Irish sport—“Ladies of title would jump on ye.”

In writing of these great ones who strutted or who still strut across our stage, it is hard to arrive at any fair estimate of their abilities. French and Haig now—were they really great generals or were they merely fair average run-of-the-mob commanders? How would a handicapper have placed them in comparison with Napoleon and Julius Caesar? We have read in the recent memoirs of Lloyd George (regarded by some people as a great statesman and by others as a blatant quack) that he constantly had to take the command of the army operations out of the hands of the generals, and so win the war. We have heard how Bill Adams won the battle of Waterloo.

These commanders in France were confronted with something quite new in warfare, as for instance when direct hits were scored on the city of Paris by a gun fired at a range of twenty-five miles. What would Napoleon Bonaparte have made of that? All that can be said here is that, of the two men, Haig

inspired the greater confidence among the troops in South Africa.

And this brings us to the consideration of another celebrity in Lord Derby, a man who was in the running for the prime ministership of England. Born in the purple, an inheritor of coal-mines, town houses, country seats, and one of the most successful studs in England, he was the typical John Bull, solid, serene, and gifted with the clear common sense of the unimaginative man. He might never have made such a prime minister as Lloyd George, for Lord Derby's outlook on life was that of the golf professional—there was only one right way to play each shot. I worked under his orders when he was chief press censor for Lord Roberts in South Africa; and though he knew nothing about the Press when he began his job, nor about censoring either for the matter of that, he soon made a success of it. Any correspondent could wake him up at any hour of the night and get a message censored; and he worked on such methodical lines that we soon found out what could go and what could not. He was like Jim Bludso in the wreck of the *Prairie Belle*, "he seen his duty, a dead-sure thing, and he went for it there and then."

I once woke him up at three o'clock in the morning, to get a message censored, and he read it by the light of a lanthorn while lying in bed. He passed it back, approved, with the remark, "Churchill will curse. He thinks he's the only correspondent that got through with this news."

Lord Derby was about the only man among the great ones who had no fear whatever of Churchill. He wasn't afraid of this big bad wolf, for the press-censorship job meant nothing in his young life, and he would not have cared if Churchill had tried to write him out of it, nor do I think that he worried much about the prime ministership. Why should he? He was Lord Derby, and any attacks on him by

Churchill or by similar small destroyers would be like trying to take Gibraltar with a rowing-boat.

A little affair that occurred over a press message may throw some light on the man who might have been prime minister. Through the influence of Gwynne, then head serang of Reuter's correspondents and later on editor of the *Morning Post*, I had been appointed an extra man for Reuter's to report especially on the doings of Australians and New Zealanders. Dropping accidentally on a small fight, I sent away a report of it and began to think myself a sort of second Archibald Forbes. The next thing was a message that Lord Derby—or Lord Stanley as he then was—wanted to see me.

“Look here,” he said, “I gave Gwynne an extra man to look after these Australians and New Zealanders because nobody else knows anything about them. Now the other correspondents complain that you have been sending messages that don't concern the Australians and New Zealanders at all. I don't know whether I oughtn't to send you home.”

Here was grief with a capital G, for these potentates are not good at listening to explanations; but Gwynne had never told me that I was to ignore everybody but Australians and New Zealanders. I thought that I was free as air to deal with the others.

Having listened to this explanation Lord Stanley said: “Well, I'll have it out with Gwynne, then. My orders to him were clear enough. He should have told you. I've no doubt he can explain it somehow, but don't let it occur again.”

The affair had a queer aftermath: for when Kimberley was relieved there were five thousand English troops in the affair and only about four hundred Australians and New Zealanders.

We could get nothing away from Kimberley, except a few words by helio, so I rode down to the Modder River and sent a thousand words from there. This got to England straight away, and appeared in *The Times*, and scores of other publications, and was cabled back to South African papers.

When these appeared there was hot time in the old town, for I had represented that Kimberley was relieved entirely by Australians and New Zealanders. I had said hardly a word about the other troops! Exasperated generals were rushing about waving these papers and asking who could have been fool enough to send such a message, and who could have been fool enough to pass it. My message had gone through the local censor at Modder River, so Stanley was not responsible, and instead of giving complicated explanations to anybody he imitated Brother Terrapin—he sat tight and said nothing. Anyhow, the Australians and the New Zealanders got a fine advertisement out of it.

I saw Lord Derby once in England when he was more concerned about breeding Derby winners than about politics, racing and hunting. Racing and hunting. Empires come and empires go, but these go on for ever.

Thomas Carlyle would no doubt have called Lord Derby a dilettante and a do-nothing aristocrat; but if he had known him he would have said that he was a man who stood four-square in a world peopled largely by weathercocks.

Another celebrity in his own line, and a very important line it is in England, was Edward Kennedy of Straffan Stud, Ireland; racing man, hunting man, and breeder of that great racehorse The Tetrarch. It is said that after the Napoleonic wars a Frenchman was found who had never heard of Napoleon, but it would have been hard to find an Englishman who had never heard of “Cub” Kennedy.

While waiting a chance to get to the war, I crossed over to Ireland on a visit to Edward Kennedy's stud near Dublin. Landing in Dublin I was driven across the town by an Irish car driver. I asked him how things were.

"The only people," he said, "that are makin' any money in Ireland is Guinness's brewery an' the horse-dealers."

I could understand Guinness's brewery, but I was puzzled about the horse-dealers, so I asked him how the horse-dealers managed it.

"They buy the cast horses," he said, "that the army officers has bought and rejected whin they found they was unsound. So these dealers buy these cast horses and they give them a rest till they get over their lameness; thin they hearten thim up a bit and they sell thim back to the army for three times what they gave for thim. There's min here has sold the same horse to the army so often it's a wonder the horse wouldn't shake hands with the officers whin he goes in to the sale."

I asked him if he knew Mr Kennedy the big breeder.

"Sure I do," he said. "He's one of the quality and yet he'll go into the sale yards an' buy an' sell cattle an' horses till he has the dealers terrified of him. What that same gentleman don't know about a horse wouldn't be worth knowin'. He bought a blind mare for eight pounds an' the man that sold it thought he was takin' the money off Kennedy, like takin' it off a child. An' Kennedy bred one of the best horses Ireland ever saw from that same mare!"

When I paid the driver off, I must have treated him rather well, for after looking at the money, he asked me where I came from. I said that I came from Australia.

“Well,” he said, “I could tell by yer talk ye wasn’t anny sort of bloody Saxon annyhow.”

December 16th 1914—At Straffan Station Stud, Ireland. I am very anxious to know how these English and Irish can breed such good horses. Certainly they have had any amount of practice at it, for they started breeding in the days of King John who was a large importer of Eastern-bred horses. The War of the Roses scattered these studs. But Henry VIII in the intervals of getting married reimported a lot of the blood and raced and bred in competition with Cardinal Wolsey: which perhaps accounted for the strained relations that arose between them.

Elizabeth raced. She had at least five training establishments including stables at Greenwich, Hampden Court, Richmond, Windsor, St Albans, Waltham, and other places. No doubt she stirred her trainers up. When Raleigh put down his over-coat to keep her feet dry, she was probably inspecting a training stable.

After three hundred years of breeding in the United States the sons of Uncle Sam had to come to England and offer over forty thousand guineas for Solario a year or so back in order to get a really good horse; and even then they did not get him.

Kennedy’s paddocks are covered in green grass, long and perhaps a trifle washy, but wonderful grass for the depth of winter. The boundaries are rough-looking hedges; a hungry cow or a long-wooled sheep (hungry or otherwise) would go through them almost anywhere. There is nothing visible to the naked eye that would explain why these pastures produce such horses. Kennedy himself, is sturdy, square, stiff-built and full of energy. I don’t think he has ever read a book on breeding in his life. It is just an instinct with him. He would have made a good cavalry officer; for in type he resembles “Hell-fire

Jack” Royston whom our readers have already met, a sort of embodiment of perpetual motion.

The place is full of trouble, with armed police at every hedge corner; but nobody has tried to interfere with Kennedy’s horses. Of an old Irish family himself, he understands the Irish and they understand him. He talks to them in a way they wouldn’t tolerate from a Saxon. After hearing a dialogue between Kennedy and one of his men, one wonders that the relationship of master and servant can exist for a day longer; but it has been going on for ten years.

Walking round the paddocks we see a load of gravel deposited in the fairway, so to speak; whereupon Kennedy, who in forcibility of gesture and emphasis has few equals and no superiors, opens up the discussion. His head groom’s son is the person in fault but head grooms mean nothing to Kennedy. He eats ’em alive. “Kelly,” he roars, “what does your son mean by leaving that gravel there? I told him to leave it on the drive!”

“He had to go draw hay, your honour, so he lift it be the gate.”

“Left it at the gate. What does he mean by leaving it at the gate? If he doesn’t want to do what I tell him he can pack up and out of this, and you with him.”

“Yes, your honour.”

The next thing is a patient ass, picturesquely tied up with odds and ends of rope, grazing on a lawn. To me he looks quite a symbol of felicity; but to Kennedy—no.

“Heavens above,” he says, “look at this will you! These damned people they did what they liked in Clonmel’s time. Mrs Mulhane, Mrs Mulhane! It’s an ass is it you’ll tie up here, so as visitors can see what

sort of a place we run. It's a wonder you wouldn't tie up a pig. Out of here with him, and out of here yourself if I ever catch sight of him again—”

“Sure he must have strayed yer honour, and got his rope cot in the fince some way.”

“Yes, I suppose so; and took two half-hitches round a post. Must have been in a circus. Take him into your own yard and see can he tie himself up. But if I see him here again—!”

A land of trouble, and yet would anyone wish to live anywhere else if he could live here? The huge old stone house has a wide entrance hall and a double stairway of polished oak leading up on either side of the hall to the floors above. One can picture the old-time Irish beauties standing half-way up that staircase, and exchanging Leveresque witticisms with the gallants below. Are we too sophisticated or too stupid for that sort of thing nowadays? Around the house there are lawns, carriage drives, and gardens sleeping in the soft Irish sunlight. Lord Clonmel, the last owner said that it cost him £800 a year in wages alone to keep the place up empty. The main stud stables cost £10,000; and there are also houses for employees, outlying boxes for stallions and foaling-boxes for mares. From the front of the house we can see over the paddocks dotted with young thoroughbreds each a potential Derby winner. Here was bred the great Tetrarch, possibly the fastest horse that ever lived; and the excitement of the game is waiting for another.

December 17th—We went through the paddocks and saw the horses. Old Roi Herode, a great vast grey horse, looked as coarse as a stockhorse except for his delicate ears. The other stallion, Symington, is a wicked old villain and not even Kennedy dared go into his yard with him. His boy coaxed him into his box with a tin of oats and we admired him in safety from the door of the box. The Tetrarch's full sister, a

beautifully balanced chestnut filly, walked like a deer, and was evidently a very precocious young lady. Unfortunately she went wrong in her training. Still, there was nothing in the look of the horses to show why these English and Irish breeders lead the world in bloodstock. The Tetrarch's dam, for instance, was a great, big, coarse mare with harpoon shoulders, just the sort that anyone would select to ride on in a cattle-camp. The idea of her breeding the world's greatest sprinter seemed ridiculous.

"Kennedy," I said, "what's the secret of all this? Why have the Americans got to come back here to buy a horse."

"I suppose it is the soil and the climate," he said. "There's something in the soil that's good for horses and the soft weather gives us green grass all the year round to keep their insides clean."

"Do you give the foals crushed oats," I said.

"Yes, as soon as they'll eat 'em, and as much as they'll eat. You have to force the growth of young thoroughbreds. I hear you have some big studs in Australia."

"Yes," I said. "We have a couple of studs that'll send fifty or sixty yearlings down for sale. At one stud they drive their yearlings loose along the road forty miles to the train."

But Kennedy wouldn't have this at all.

"Drive them loose, is it," he said. "That's just one of your Australian stories. Who ever heard of such nonsense!"

"They do."

"Well, all I can say is that if I tried it, my yearlings would run slap into the Irish sea. Come along and we'll go and look at Clonmel's horses."

“What are they doing here.”

“I bought the place from him. He was in Short Street—hard up you know—and as soon as the war came along, he went off to the trenches and left his creditors to fight it out. I had to stick to a man that’s in the trenches, so I have about twenty mares and a couple of stallions and all his grooms and hangers-on here.”

“Anyway I’ll see him through; he might be able to collect that three hundred for me from the German Emperor.”

So much for Kennedy. Now for the hunt. An Irish Hunt is a thing to be remembered: with the soft turf underneath, the grey skies overhead, the dewdrops on the grass, and the flakes of mist drifting over the blue hills in the distance. It was all very beautiful. Everything seemed set for one of those rollicking Irish Hunts described by Dorothea Conyers in which everybody rides along exchanging witticisms, and the beautiful daughter of the impoverished Irish chieftain steals the young English millionaire from under the very claws of her flamboyant and unpleasant rival.

(It is strange, by the way, how these women writers never let up on their unpleasant characters. A male writer will allow the villain or villainess to triumph for a few brief moments—sometimes; but a woman writer will never let them win a single round.)

However, to resume. In the absence of Kennedy, who had met with an accident, I was put in charge of a strong-minded Irish lady, a sort of understudy for Lady Knox in that deathless book, *The Experiences of an Irish R M.* By virtue of some distant relationship I was told to call her “Cousin Norah.” Somewhere about forty, fresh complexioned, weighing in the neighbourhood of fifteen stone and

beautifully turned out, she scanned me from head to foot:

“That hat of yours,” she said “is it all right? It looks so damnably wrong that it must be all right, or nobody would dare wear it. Tell me now, would the Prince of Wales wear that sort of hat?”

Here I was—in trouble again! I had hurried into a crack London hat shop and bought this hat without giving the matter due consideration. It was an excellent hat, of the true hard-hitter type; but instead of being the regulation black or grey colour, it was a sort of blend in which the black and the grey contended for supremacy: possibly the only hat of its sort ever made. No doubt the salesman, when he saw me coming, said: “Thank God, here’s some one that’ll buy that hat.” I knew, in a vague sort of way, that a man had better be seen with the wrong wife than with the wrong hat in England; I did not know that it would matter so much in Ireland. I had yet to learn that while the world persists in regarding the Irish as comic strips the Irish themselves have quite other views.

“I don’t know whether it’s right or not,” I said. “Anyhow, it wouldn’t matter very much here, would it?”

“Ho, wouldn’t it!” said my Cousin Norah. “People think anything will do in Ireland. They’d come here and hunt in sheepskins I suppose. Watch yerself annyhow. They’ll get ye down if they can.”

“Get me down. Why?”

“Just devilment. Half the comic stories in the world begin ‘There was an Irishman named Mick;’ and the other half begin ‘There was an Irishman named Pat.’ An’ the boys don’t like it. Whin they see a stranger they say to thimselves: ‘We’ll give ye some Mick and Pat for it, me bold lad, before ye’re much older.’ Ivry

one makes 'em out to be monkeys, and they'll act like monkeys."

"But I never told a story about Mick and Pat—never in my life."

"No. And if they can get ye a good fall, 'twill be a lesson to ye niver to tell one."

Arrived at the meet, people did not gather together in groups and chat in the usual manner. They circled slowly round looking at my hat; and my Cousin Norah said darkly:

"If they don't have sport one way, this day, they'll have it another."

I was riding a fine, bold-going, four-year-old; but when the hounds settled down after a fox I did not try to distinguish myself. The Master was a big heavy man and I followed him as accurately as though I were towed behind him by a piece of string. I reckoned that wherever he went I could go. Thrusters on fast horses cut in in front of me and dashed away, looking over their shoulders as though challenging me to follow. Not a bit of it. I had read the adventures of Soapy Sponge and how the members of the Flat Hat Hunt either ran across him at a jump, or tried to lead him into a bog. The Master for me every time!

We lost that fox. While jogging across to another covert the Hunt Secretary and one of the whips placed their horses just in front of me, and before I knew what I was doing I was following them. Nobody else followed.

"Come across here," they said. "It's a short cut."

We came to quite a harmless-looking hedge and the whip gathered his horse together, popped over it, and disappeared from sight. The Secretary followed him, and then it was my turn. My four-year-old

rushed it eagerly and not knowing the place he jumped very big. When we were in the air I found that there was a drop of at least seven feet to the field below. A lovely place!

Before I had time to think of any suitable last words the big Irish colt landed on his knees, his nose, and his hoofs, distributing the shock among them, and making a perfect three point landing. Only a horse as clever as a cat could have done it. I heaved a sigh of relief, and decided that only a man with a revolver would get me away from the tail of the Master's horse for the rest of the day.

Then the Secretary found out that I was an Australian, and he was full of apologies.

"Sure I didn't know," he said. "They're great comic people, the Australians, I hear; always puttin' men on buck-jumpers to get them a fall. I'd like to go there and see them, they're that comic. Come and I'll introjuice ye to the Master."

The Master was all dignity and deportment, though I think he knew more about the proceedings than he cared to admit.

"Are you making a long stay in Ireland," he said.

I told him that I was only staying for a few days.

"Well," he said, "you won't want to buy any horses so I'll tell 'em to keep off you."

I said, "How do you mean keep off me?"

"Everybody here," he said, "rich and poor, swell and peasant, they all have horses for sale. If they think you're a buyer they'll give you no peace. There's ladies of title here so keen to sell their horses that if they saw you lying on the ground after a fall they'd jump on you just so as you'd have to notice their horse."

Relieved of any fear of assassination I concentrated on navigating my four-year-old over such country as I had never met in Australia. Most of the jumps were banks about four feet high with a six-foot ditch each side; and the horses had to jump on top of the bank and then jump off again. The hedges were all thorns, with only one place where you could get at them, and that place all boggy and slippery. I thought I was doing wonders to get along at all, until I looked round and saw a little girl on a fourteen hand pony following me. It was very pretty to watch her. The pony would go at the first ditch and land about half-way up the bank; then he would scramble up to the top and slide half-way down the other side. Poising here for a moment like a chamois, he would gather his feet together and spring out over the second ditch. The little girl never interfered with him, beyond tapping him on the shoulder occasionally with a stick when she wanted him to make a spring. I said to a man riding next me that I had never seen jumping like it.

“Jump, is it,” he said. “Ye could hunt a cat on that one and wherever the cat’d go that one’d be treading the tail off it.”

Then came the catastrophe.

We arrived at a ditch about twelve feet across, six feet deep, full of water, and with steep slippery banks. We could only get at it in one place and had to take our turns and go at it one at a time. Someone spoke to me and distracted my attention for a moment and when the horse in front of me made his jump, my horse took me by surprise and jumped at almost the same instant. The two horses were in the air together, one exactly behind the other, and when the horse in front of me fell short and landed half in and half out of the ditch mine landed on top of him—climbed up his back one might say—knocking both horse and rider back into the ditch. It was an accident, of course; but my part in the affair looked

like a combination of bad riding and bad manners, and I was in terror till the horseman rose from the ditch like Neptune rising from the sea, cursing fluently, while his horse made a heave and a scramble and got out also. Neither of them was hurt. As I did not know the proper etiquette under the circumstances I went away from there as quickly as I could and caught up with the Master.

“I’ve done a terrible thing,” I said. “I jumped on a man and knocked him and his horse into a ditch; but they’re not hurt.”

A Master of Hounds is entitled to say anything to anybody—he can even be-devil the Prince of Wales—so I knew that whatever was coming I had to sit and take it. We were only riding at a walk from one covert to another at the time, so the riders all crowded round, grinning, to hear the Australian told off.

Looking round to see that his audience were all attention the Master opened out.

“You jumped on a man, did you?” he roared. “Just because we’re poor Irish, you think you can come all the way from Australia and jump on us! In the Shires they’d stand you up against a wall and shoot you! But I’ll tell you what I’ll do.”

Here he had another look round to see that nobody was missing it.

“There’s a lot of these lads here haven’t paid their subscriptions,” he went on. “I’ll point ’em out to you, and you can come along and jump on ’em to your heart’s content.”

When I got home, and handed over the horse to the head groom, I told him about knocking the man into the ditch.

“Ye done well,” he said. “They’d have felt hurted if an Australian hadn’t done something quare for ’em.”

Chapter 5

A Dutch Consul

We try to hustle the East—The Captain and the Consul—A Malay that ran amok—“Ya, Ya, plenty monkey”—The Australians get badly left—“Black squad” and “poop ornaments”—Trouble in the deep-sea trade.

In 1901 there was war in the air. The great god Democracy, after having been kept down for centuries by the rocks of conservatism, had begun to shake himself free and to throw things about. Even the Chinese who had set a world’s record for passive endurance—anything that came along they just “sot and tuck it,” like Brother Terrapin—even the Chinese had formed a sort of anti-missionary society to protest against things in general and missionaries in particular. This society was afterwards known as the Boxers. They emphasized their views by robbing and murdering Christian converts; and this became so popular that the Boxer movement was extended to attack, not only converts, but all property-owners without distinction of creed, class or race. If the Boxer movement had been allowed to go unchecked, it would have extended all over China, for anybody will join a society to help one’s self.

All nations, therefore, sent troops to China to take up the white man’s burden and, incidentally, any of the yellow man’s concessions that might be lying about. Then, too, there was talk of a war between Russia and Japan. As I had received a letter of thanks from Baron Reuter for my correspondent’s work in the Boer War, I thought I would draw four cards to that ace: I would go up to the East and see if I could get a job from Reuter’s on either side in any war that might happen along. I preferred to be with a white army as I had an idea that Chinese impaled

correspondents on bamboos. But Australians cannot always be choosers.

July 29th 1901—Sailing for China. There is a shipment of horses on board for griffin racing in Shanghai. They are shipped by a little Jew horse-dealer who is sending three grooms with them—and three lively specimens they are. One of the grooms is an old Englishman, a fine-looking man who has been coachman to a governor, but has spent too many years of his life collecting the contents of glasses. The other two are Australian flotsam and jetsam; one a big hulking fellow who will probably do a bit of second-class prize-fighting when he gets to the East. They agreed to go for thirty shillings a week and second-class accommodation, but the Jew has only paid for third-class accommodation. There is much argument, and the old Englishman has a few words with the second-saloon steward. “Ho,” he says, “don’t speak to me about bein’ himpitant. I’ve been himpitant to the Marquis of Normanby, I ’ave, so I ain’t drawin’ the line at second-saloon stooards.”

The grooms bring their gear ashore—old tin boxes and shapeless bundles—and sit on the wharf. The Jew haggles with the purser, and each time that he comes back to the wharf the grooms say to him: “No, it’s no use, Frank, we won’t go now; even if they gave us the captain’s cabin we wouldn’t go. If they treat us like this in port what’ll they do when we get outside—puttin’ us among the Chows!”

Finally a deal is struck and we get away, the ship having been delayed two hours. But the white men have carried their point, and they do not herd with Chinese passengers.

Must learn all I can about the East. Made friends with the chief engineer, a Scotchman. He says Kipling is dreadfully inaccurate. “He talks of destroyers lyin’ close in to the reefs—close in to the

reefs, mark you—an' they drawin' six feet forrard and nine fit aft."

Even Homer sometimes nods, apparently.

He says that the Chinese are a peculiar people. It seems they had a custom of putting half-bricks into every bag of sugar, not clandestinely but openly. Why, he didn't know.

"The shipping manager at Swatow—that big fat man, y'unnerstan'—he used all his influence wi' them. He said they might as well put in five pounds of sugar as five pound of bricks. Just as cheap. The sugar's worth very little an' they had all the trouble of gettin' the bricks. But they wouldn'a have it. 'It belong old fashion' was all he could get out of them."

July 30th—At sea. A Sydney lady, whom I knew as a very beautiful girl, is on board. She is married to an official in Siam and is going back with a small child to rejoin her husband. She says Siam has a climate like the worst parts of India. Neither she nor the baby look fit to go back to it. Our girls go out pluckily to the ends of the earth, where they struggle with sick children, malaria, prickly heat, etc. But no one writes poems about them.

Our captain, Typhoon Tommy as they call him on the water-front, is an Australian. Over six feet high, strong as a bull, and particularly hard-boiled. He doesn't drink at all at sea and when he comes on board after some glad days ashore he is pretty irritable. When getting under way he roared:

"Hoist up that jib!"

"Jib is hoisted, sir!"

"Well, hoist it down again. Who told you to hoist it?"

He would make a good general: he wants the initiative in everything.

The lady passenger for Siam has no nurse with her and has to look after her child herself. The youngster is very trying, and is wearing the mother out. Typhoon Tommy comes to the rescue.

“I’ll fix it for you, Mrs Floyd,” he said. Then, roaring down the deck: “Send number one boy here!”

Number one boy is the chief Chinese steward, and he comes ambling up, wondering what he has done now.

CAPTAIN: “Catchee one piecee steward, all same nurse pidgin, longa baby. Can do?”

NUMBER ONE BOY: “Can do.”

By which is meant that one of the Chinese stewards is to adopt the pidgin or business of nurse to the baby. Soon an impassive Chinaman comes along; takes all the child’s expensive toys away, and gives it a small onion and an empty reel of cotton as playthings. Jointly they hurl these objects about the deck. After half an hour of it the child is thoroughly happy and would as soon go to the Chinaman as to his mother. From that day on the mother had no trouble with the child. The captain says that Chinamen are the best nurses in the world.

At Thursday Island, which is a little bit of the East. There are more nationalities here than there were at the Tower of Babel—every Caucasian nation, local blacks, kanakas, Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Malays, New Guinea boys. The local white police have to be very wide awake to nip any troubles in the bud; for, when the Orientals, especially the Malays, have any grievance to avenge, they go stark staring mad. So the police here act like American police—club them first and find out about the trouble afterwards. Nobody has any rights up here; the glorious doctrine of democracy does not run north of Rockhampton. A pearler engaged two men, a Malay

and a kanaka, to work on his lugger, and gave them the usual advance of ten pounds. They made a plot to stow away on our ship and get away with the tenners. The Malay billiard-marker at the local hotel gave the plot away and the kanaka was captured and locked up. The Malay evaded capture till dark. Then he went to the hotel, called out the billiard-marker and opened fire on him with a revolver. The first bullet took the ground; the second hit a bystander; and the third broke some bottles on the bar. The billiard-marker ran upstairs chattering like an ape. The barmaid lay flat on the floor among the bottles. She said: "I guessed he would have to fire low if he wanted to lay me out." Then the Malay decamped, and up to the time we left he was at large in Thursday Island.

This trip up the Australian coast between the Barrier Reef and the mainland is one of the world's ideal excursions. There is no swell, and the sea is so smooth that a cabin door, left ajar, will, remain ajar for hour after hour, neither swinging shut nor open. All day long the ship is passing coral reefs, and tropical islands where flying foxes in myriads sleep all day in the jungles, and Torres Strait pigeons settle in clouds on the wild fig-trees. In the interior of some of these islands there are flocks of wild goats; and on the beaches the turtles come ashore to lay their eggs in the sand. The sea is intensely blue and the climate just pleasantly hot. There is nothing to do except order drinks from the Chinese stewards and listen to the Chinese leadsman calling "Mark Tu-wev" (mark twelve) as he swings his lead over side; for the sea, though beautiful, is treacherous, and here and there the charts show unsurveyed patches that keep the already irritable Typhoon Tommy on tenter-hooks. By way of learning something about horse transport at sea in the tropics, I went down and gave the grooms a hand with the horses in the 'tween decks.

It makes one realize how hard the world has to work. Down in a sort of Turkish bath, caused by the close air and the heat of the animals' bodies, each of these men has to feed, water, and groom twenty-eight horses, a lot of them unbroken. The animals are closely packed in little, narrow stalls, so that, in case of a typhoon, they will not be thrown off their feet; and spare stalls are left so that, as each horse is cleaned, it can be moved up one place. The horses get so tired and leg-weary that they fall down if they go to sleep; then the whole lot may have to be moved to get one horse on his feet again. The old English groom who looks like a cavalry colonel is in charge, and whatever his previous shortcomings may have been he is certainly doing his best by these horses.

“There you are,” he says, “I was coachman to the Marquis o’ Normanby, and if ’e kep’ my ’osses waitin’ of a cold night, ’e’d ’ear from me, I can tell yer. And now I’m groomin’ twenty-eight of these savages for thirty shillin’ a week, when a man oughn’t to be asked to do more than eighteen, And we used to get two pound ten a week. We tried to get the two ten; but there’s so many after a job they had us beat.”

It recalled Kipling’s man on the cattle-boat, who said:

And I am in charge of the lower deck with all that doth belong. Which they wouldn’t give to a lunatic, with the competition so strong.

After I had paid my footing with a few drinks, they took a brighter view of life. The old Englishman thought he might get a Government House job up in Hong Kong; the big hulking Australian said that he ought to be able to fix up for a fight or two in the East; and the little fellow who had never been away from Australia in his life was quite confident that he would do well among the “Pats” (Chinese).

“I’m one of these blokes,” he said, “that can plait meself in anywhere. If they was to shut me up in a hen-house I’d start to crow.”

Off Port Darwin. One of these violent little interludes that occasionally enliven a tropical voyage was staged to-day. The chief steward had been allowed to bring his wife with him as far as Port Darwin on their honeymoon trip, and the lady had laid out all her best clothes on the bed, intending to stagger Port Darwin when she went ashore. A Malay deck-hand, washing down the decks, let a full head of water go down a ventilator into the cabin, soaking the lady and her clothes and the chief steward’s papers. The chief steward ran on deck and hit the Malay; then the Malay dropped the hose and charged straight at the steward with a kris in his hand. The steward ran for his life with the Malay after him, round the horse-stalls and up the alley-way like a rabbit. The steward darted through the door into his cabin, and while the Malay was fumbling with the lock the second engineer arrived, hit the Malay a couple of times, took his kris from him, and scragged him back to his work.

(Then the Malay complained to the captain that the second engineer had hit him.)

There is an everlasting feud, like a Sicilian vendetta, between the deck officers and the engineers on some deep-sea vessels. The engineers refer to the deck officers as “poop ornaments” and the deck officers call the engineers the “black squad.” Sometimes when a ship is due to sail, a shipper will come down and hail the captain and say: “When are you ready to sail, Captain?” And the captain, in a voice to be heard all over the ship, will reply: “You’ll have to ask the black squad.” Then, when the query is referred to the chief engineer he will reply in a hoarse Scotch bellow: “Whun the poop ornaments are ready.” As our ship had been making bad time owing to a foul bottom, the captain had chosen to blame the

engineers and was even more ready than usual to throw his weight about.

CAPTAIN (to second engineer): "What do you mean, Mr Macpherson, by striking a deck-hand? I won't have any of the black squad strike a deck-hand on my ship. What do you mean by it?"

SECOND ENGINEER: "Ah wuz savin' the chief steward's life."

CAPTAIN: "Never mind about the chief steward's life. Never mind about that. If the chief steward gets killed, that's my look-out. It's got nothing to do with you. If you'd attend to your own business and strike some of your firemen we'd get the ship along better. For two pins I'd put you in arrest."

SECOND ENGINEER (who, being a Scotchman, must have the last word): "Aye, ye hov the power to do that, an' we'll see whut the Marrine Engineers' Assossiation wull say when we get ashore."

As the captain knows that the marine engineers could boycott his ship and that he would have to walk the beach for the rest of his life he drops the second engineer like a hot potato and sends for the Malay. That worthy, being still in a state of "amok," doesn't draw the line at being insolent to captains. When asked a question in the Malay language by the captain he retorts, in Malay, with a foul insult. The captain hits him, knocking him down the companion-way, and breaking a bone in his own hand. So the good ship *Floating Hell* goes on her voyage with the chief steward's wife in hysterics, or next thing to it; with a Malay deck-hand who has been hit: (1) by the steward for ducking his cabin, (2) by the second engineer for trying to kill the chief steward, and (3) by the captain for insolence, and is just waiting, to get level with one or all of his oppressors. Add to this that the black squad are furious at the treatment accorded their hero, and are

holding meetings at which they congratulate the second engineer on having made the captain back-water, and at which they appoint a bodyguard to accompany the second engineer every time he goes on deck at night.

They staged the drama of the “Black Squad’s Revenge” later on, when Typhoon Tommy was a bit out of his latitude trying to find a small island port in the Celebes group. They found out, in some uncanny Scotch way, that Tommy had calculated that twelve hours steaming at the ship’s normal crawl of eight knots an hour would fetch him just opposite the port at daylight. So all that night they drove their firemen feverishly and piled on coal enough to stoke a Cunarder. They got twelve knots an hour out of her, and when Tommy came on deck at daylight, instead of being off the island he was forty miles past it. Climbing up to his bridge he was surprised to see the three engineers on deck, all leaning over the rail and spitting contentedly into the sea.

“Look at him,” said the chief engineer. “He does na’ ken whether he’s at Hong Kong or off Parramatta.”

Then, when Tommy put her about, and found the island, there was more trouble. When he went astern to drop the anchor the log-line had not been hauled in and the propeller gathered it up in style and chewed up the log and about thirty feet of the line. A dug-out came off crowded with Malays and skippered by a half-bred Portuguese, who was port officer, collector of customs, consul and general Pooh Bah. We had to land four Ballarat mining-engineers—they say there are Ballarat men even in Siberia—and Tommy wanted to know what port dues the ship would have to pay. The torpor of the tropics had eaten all the intelligence out of the Portuguese—or so we thought. But we were to find out our mistake later on.

“Your esheep, captain, she stay port only one day? Good, I go shore and I see. I not know what ze port due one day.”

Tommy sent the chief officer and the doctor and myself ashore and gave the chief officer six pounds to pay the port dues. On shore the people, little brown Malays like Japanese, many of them with a very Jewish type of face, simply swarmed. A corpulent Dutchman with spectacles and a silk umbrella was the head serang of the place, and after him trotted his aide-de-camp, a little brown Malay carrying a sword. Transport was provided by bullock-carts not much bigger than wheelbarrows and drawn by cattle not much bigger than goats. The ponies were so small that a man could stand alongside and put his leg over them just as easily as over a bicycle. It all looked like a doll's house come to life. And over it brooded the sweltering heat of the tropics; the smell of rotting fish and decaying vegetation. Somebody started to eat *durians* in a shack alongside the road. The *durian* has a smell that can make Limburger cheese, or an American skunk, appear like attar of roses. Vessels loaded with this fruit are exempt from carrying lights.

In this pantomime country we three Australians felt like Gulliver among the Lilliputians. Of course, the first thing was to sample the local drinks. One naturally drinks vodka in Russia, samshoo in China, and in Malaya it had to be arrack.

“I haven't much left to live for,” said the ship's doctor. “I've been everywhere and eaten and drunk pretty well everything. Now I'm going to have a feed of *durian* and a drink of arrack; and if I live I'll go home and set up a retreat for inebriates. Bring on your arrack.”

The cringing little Malay opened a cupboard and produced—a bottle of square gin.

“No, not that stuff,” said the doctor, “on board ship we put that stuff on sugar to intoxicate cockroaches. Arrack! Arrack! Haven’t you ever heard of arrack?”

The Malay made the wash-out signal with his hands, and stood looking at us as if he were going to burst into tears.

“Oh, well, don’t cry about it,” said the doctor. “You’ve done your damndest. We’ll assimilate some gin, and then we’ll go and look for arrack later on.”

After absorbing a few gins the chief officer rose and said:

“Well, I feel just right now to take on this consul. Come down and see me make him hang by his tail from a tree.”

We found the official in at little sweat-box of an office, nervously pawing over the ship’s papers. As he answered “Ya, ya” to practically every remark, we gathered that he didn’t understand much English.

“Very katoogrious weather we’re having,” said the chief officer.

“Ya, ya,” said the Portuguese.

“Are there many monkeys about? I mean besides what’s in the town.”

“Ya, ya, plenty monkey.”

They then set to work to calculate the ship’s tonnage, and after getting four different results they agreed on a figure. In a weary, indifferent sort of way the small man did some figuring on a bit of paper and handed over the result—fifty-eight pound ten!

As the doctor afterwards said, the chief officer looked as aghast as a man who had swallowed a chew of tobacco.

“Fifty-eight pounds ten,” he roared. “Why, Hong Kong wouldn’t charge a quarter of it! Sydney would only charge fifteen pounds! We anchor two miles off shore, and we send four passengers and three tons of stuff in our own boats on to a sandy beach where there’s no harbour at all, and you want fifty-eight pounds ten! They’re moving all the stuff we landed up the beach in bullock-carts that look like two goats in a perambulator, and you want fifty-eight pounds ten!”

The consul gave the wash-out signal and said: “I send Minhado,” meaning that he would refer the matter to his official headquarters.

“Minhado. How long will that take?”

“Two day.”

“Two days. You want us to keep the ship paying wages for two days while you send to Minhado?”

“Ya, ya.”

Like a man going over the top against a heavy barrage the chief shouldered his way through about a thousand hostile natives that had been listening outside the shack.

“Come on,” he said. “Give me a few more gins and then I’ll go off and tell Tommy. This bird has got the ship’s papers and I don’t want to start anything that I can’t finish. Tommy can speak Malay and he’ll give this cove some ya, ya, if I’m any judge.”

The arrival of Tommy, very spick and span and belligerent, drew about a thousand more children of nature down to the beach. They looked so hostile that Tommy decided to do his bluffing in English.

“Why didn’t you tell me on board,” he said, “then I wouldn’t have landed these people? I treated you as a gentleman. Where’s your book? Where’s the bill

the *Guthrie* paid? Where's your official papers? You may be a swindler for all I know. Will you take an order on Butterfield and Swire?"

The consul—if he was a consul—just shook his head at everything and repeated his chant of "Minhado, Minhado."

Tommy came over to us and whispered very softly:

"I've a good mind to plug him one under the jaw, take the ship's papers, and clear."

The gin had given us a lot of Dutch courage, and most of us endorsed the suggestion, but the doctor was not enthusiastic: he had made several voyages to the East.

"Good enough for him if you did," he said, "but let us others get down to the boat first. Every one of these banana-coloured sportsmen has a creese hidden in his night-shirt, and you know what Malays are like, once they start!"

So Tommy paid out fifty-eight pounds ten in gold, grinding his teeth at each sovereign, and we marched off to the beach escorted by a hooting rabble. They packed the long jetty. Once we were safely in the boat Tommy drew his revolver and waved it at them. With one accord they sprang off the jetty and disappeared under water like black ducks. We boarded the ship in silence; hauled in the pick, and started away for Manila. We had often heard about a Dutch uncle; now we had met one.

Chapter 6

General Chaffee

An American general and his troubles—The Filipino refuses to be a man and a brother— Rifles in the thatch—

The Americans plucked a plum—Or it may be a lemon—
Schoolteacher that was first in the water.

August 21st 1901—Approaching Manila. The horses smell the land and whinny loudly. They have an extraordinary sense of time, for a man can walk about among them without attracting any attention till feed-time comes round; but let a man make his appearance at feed-time and they paw the deck and start to rattle the feed-boxes with their teeth. These down in the foul air of the 'tween decks have not done half as well as those up on the fo'c'sle, exposed to the spray and swept by the winds which were cold when we left Australia.

It is hot enough here, for we are just north of the line, and there is nearly as much moisture in the air as in the sea. The engineer says that the people of Manila use a four-hundred-gallon tank as a rain-gauge. All the islands are green as emeralds set in a turquoise sea. The frontage of each island consists of a flat beach, in some cases four miles deep, packed with coconut-palms—thousands of them—as close as they will grow. Behind the flat land the hills rise up for about twelve hundred feet, all rich volcanic soil; and every mountain-side is terraced with plantations of coffee, spices, and so on, growing in orderly rows like orange-orchards or maize-fields seen from a distance.

Mile after mile along the coast it is the same—the coconuts on the foreshore, the plantations on the hillsides, and above them a dense wall of timber reaching to the top of the mountain; and always a snow-white cloud hangs over the mountain-tops. Our Australian foreshores are mostly barren and forbidding, but this country had its jewellery in the shop window.

The chief engineer came on deck and waved his hand at this panorama.

“There y’are,” he said, “there’s a nice bit o’ proputtty to pick up, jist for the trouble o’ knocking holes in a few Noah’s Arks that they called the Spanish navy. As fast as one ship was sunk, the poor old Dons scuttled out of it and got on to another. Ye’ll see the corpses o’ their ships lyin’ on the beach. But y’unnerstan’ the Yankees had pluck. They took their ships in through a strait only five miles wide, wi’ a forrt each side. A handful o’ real gunners could ha’ sunk them, but the Dons in they forrts were an ondeesciplined rabble.”

Here the doctor chipped in with the sequel to the victory.

“I was in Manila,” he said. “When the Spaniards were licked, the British consul got the wind up, and thought the Filipinos would rise and murder all the foreigners. So he wired for the *Powerful*, and she came like a floating castle, seventeen knots an hour, cleared for action. That settled any rebellion. And then the Yanks decided to uplift the Filipinos. What do you think was the first cargo they brought over? A cargo of six hundred school-teachers! Every school-teacher in the lot wanted to be the first to land in Manila, and when the tender came alongside they shoved each other into the water. One woman was picked up very nearly drowned, and when they got her to the ship’s hospital she said: ‘Well I won’t be the first to land, but anyway I was the first in the watta!’”

“And now,” the doctor went on, “these Filipinos are so grateful at being freed that they are shooting at the Americans in the streets at night. This war between the Americans and the Filipinos has a comic opera skinned to death. When you get ashore you go and see old General Chaffee, and ask him whether he’d sooner fight Boers or fight Filipinos.”

On landing at Manila we saw some hustle. The streets were packed with people, mostly Filipinos.

Some of the little bronze-black women were very fresh and attractive looking. A few of the men were very muscular, probably men that worked cargo on the ships, but most of them had no more physique than a lot of schoolboys. There were Japanese, Chinese, Hindus, American soldiers and civilians, poor whites of all nations—one might have been back at Thursday Island only for the uniforms in the streets. Indescribable bustle and hurry and fuss pervaded all, and the restaurants, photo-shops and squash-shops were crowded. Money was being turned over all right.

But I met a drunken English ship's captain out of a job who said: "There's nothing in the place for the likes of you and me." I asked him to have a drink and he invited three friends to join in. Then I found that the sale of liquor was forbidden unless a meal was purchased at the same time, as I didn't feel like buying meals for four disreputable strangers I was wondering how to get out of it when the ship captain said that the meals were just a joke:

"They'll hand you a dried-up sardine on a plate with your drink and that's your meal. Take it or leave it. They haven't got to make you eat the meal. The Yankee soldiers were gettin' tight and passin' remarks about the women goin' around with their officers. Their wives—I don't think. So they brought in this meal dodge, to keep the soldiers sober. But you can't keep a soldier off drink, nor a sailor neither."

Sure enough, we entered a packed bar and, after a long wait, we were each served with a drink, and a plate with one sardine on it was pushed over to me. I was a stranger and might be an informer, but the others were well known and had their exemption certificates.

The American soldiers were fine men physically, and about as hard-featured as our own Australian lot.

Their horses were mostly American, and would have compared well with anything we had in South Africa. However, they were not doing any hard work, for a mounted regiment in this campaign would be about as much use as a navy in Switzerland. Their equipment for the mounted men was a little lighter than ours, in fact all American gear seems to be lighter than English. But if the American troop horses were doing nothing the little local ponies were doing plenty, and doing it well. One would see a couple of these midgets harnessed to a horse tram, and when they wanted to start it they had to bend their backs like ferrets and tug and strain till they got the unwieldy thing under way.

All were stallions; for castration was not practised and the mares were kept out of the town lest they should distract the stallions from their jobs of shifting tram-cars and pulling vehicles. The work done by those Lilliputians, and by the Basuto ponies in South Africa, opened my eyes considerably; and when I became a remount officer in Egypt I had no hesitation in advising the officers to take ponies from our depots in preference to horses. But nobody believes anything that a man says about a horse. I only created the impression that I was trying to get rid of the ponies and to keep the horses for my friends.

However, all this is taking us a long way from General Chaffee and the American war against the Filipinos. Knowing from my South African experience that a general officer commanding in the field is about as accessible as the Grand Llama of Tibet, I armed myself with a letter of recommendation from Sir John See, Premier of New South Wales. This letter, by the way, I had used once, and once only, in South Africa. I had showed it to a railway staff officer in support of a plea that I should be allowed to go to the front. After reading it, and studying the government seal and the beautiful

gold-lettered heading, he tossed it back with the remark:

“What the hell do I care for the Premier of New South Wales!”

So it was without any great hope that I took it along to try it on the American.

The General's quarters were in a beautiful old Spanish *hacienda*, with palm-trees in front and magnificent creepers growing over the stone gateway. I had expected the usual crowd and bustle about a headquarters, sentries everywhere and staff officers hurrying about as though they were going to do a spot of work. Here everything was peace, and there was not even a sentry in sight. I thought I had come to the wrong place till I made out a man in uniform sitting in a rocking-chair under the shade of the creepers and smoking a big cigar. A rifle lay across his knees and his cap was tilted well over his face to keep off the sun. I could have sneaked up to him and either shot him or brained him with a club, and he would never have known the difference.

I said to him: “Are these General Chaffee's quarters?”

“Waall,” he said, “they might be, at that. There's stacks of generals in here. So many of 'em I've lost interest in 'em.”

“Can I go up and see him?”

“Sure, brother. What's to stop you?”

After passing this rag-time sentry I expected to find a rag-time aide-de-camp, one of these raw-beef and-blood-gravy boys of the American Press; a man who would draw his scalping-knife and give his college yell at sight of a stranger; but the aide-de-camp went back on me, so to speak.

He might have come straight off Lord Roberts's staff, where they were mostly young soldiers of title.

The young American said he had fought in Cuba, Manila and China, but hadn't got any medals yet—they were slow about medals. I handed him my letter from the Premier of New South Wales recommending me as a correspondent. Instead of telling me to go and eat cake or any wise-crack of that sort, he said:

“Sure, the General will see you.”

Then I remembered that the American is afraid of only one thing—his own Press. Did not an American correspondent in Cuba hit a general on the nose because he (the correspondent) was not allowed to hoist the flag over a captured city? When an American millionaire refused to allow reporters into his house to interview the Prince of Wales, did not the American Press publish the dread sentence of excommunication by saying that never again would that millionaire's name appear in their social columns? Whereupon, one supposes the American millionaire went out and wept bitterly.

When I got in to see the General I found a kindly and much-worried veteran who seemed quite glad to hear about somebody else's troubles in South Africa. When I told him about the trouble we had in getting the Boers to stand still long enough to be shot at, he spoke his piece like a man and a brother:

“Say,” he said, “you've seen this country, all mountain and jungle that a dog couldn't open his mouth to bark in? You'll understand the trouble. They don't understand it in the States. They don't understand why I don't get this war over with and came home. Do you know who are shooting my men? The wharf-labourers that are loading your ship! They've all got rifles hidden in the thatch of their houses and they take them out of a night and

shoot into my camp. I can't burn all the thatched houses in Manila. Our people wouldn't stand for it. And those Moros back in the hills! If we go up there after them all we see is the butt of a cigar lying in a little narrow goat-track through the jungle; and all we hear is a bullet coming from way off through the scrub."

"If we catch any of 'em all we can do is to tie them down and fill 'em up with watta till they show us their villages. I've got most of the generals, that there is anything to, cleaned up right now. But we daren't go away. If we went away there'd be hell with the lid off here in a week. I'd look well if I took the boys away and landed in the States with the bands playing 'Johnny Comes Marching Home,' and a wire came through of a lot of Spaniards and Americans being killed here."

I asked him how the Filipinos got that way; and why they wanted to murder their rich Uncle Sam instead of behaving themselves.

"They're like children," he said. "When we beat the Spaniards the Filipinos said: 'Here's happy days at last. Here's all these plantations, and all these shops and all these banks, and they're all going to belong to us.' And when we said: 'Not so Bolivia,' they turned nasty. They dug out the rifles and took to the jungle. No, we've put our hand to the plough, and if we let go, it will give us a jolt in the jaw. We daren't leave all these nationals at the mercy of a lot of excited children like the Filipinos. No, sir!"

The General, in some vague sort of way, suggested Mark Twain, both in appearance and manner of speech. He had the same clear-cut jaw, heavy eyebrows, and grizzled moustache, and he spoke, as Mark Twain always did, like a man rehearsing a lecture. Perhaps he was getting himself word perfect before he went back to the States to explain why he took so long over his job.

That night there was a rattle of rifle-shots on the wharf alongside our ship. It turned out that some Filipinos had sneaked down in the darkness and set fire to a mountain of forage, enough to have burnt the town down.

A sentry had seen the flames and had shot two of the Filipinos with his heavy Krag-Jorgensen rifle before they could get round the corner—not much rag-time army about that! But there is nothing that keeps sentries so much on the alert as the knowledge that they may be fired on at any time, and from any direction.

After leaving the General I ran against the sergeant-major of a black regiment. I had seen the Life Guards and the gilded popinjays of the English staff; but for a ball of style, commend me to a black sergeant-major. Everything about him, even his face, shone in the sun, and he moved with the dignity of an elephant at the head of a procession. I told him I had been with the British Army in Africa, and he seemed politely interested.

“Yo mustn’t jedge ouah ahmy, sah, by dese recruits,” he said, waving his hand with infinite scorn in the direction of a white American soldier who was leaning against a fence in a humped-up attitude. “If we had that man in ouah redg’ment we’d just nacherally tie him to a post to take the hump offen his back.”

I asked him what the fighting was like, He said:

“It’s not essackly fightin’, sah; it’s just plain ’sassination. They pours lead into us out’n the jungle, and when we catch them we just pours watter into them. Did yo ahmy pour watter into the Boers, sah?”

I wondered to myself what sort of a letter the German Emperor would have written, if we had

captured General Botha and filled him with water. But *à la guerre comme à la guerre*, and water seemed to be the only thing for the Fllipinos.

August 22nd—Met an Australian named Allen who is carrying on a stevedore's business here. He says that he landed here about five years ago with three dollars in the world and a gold watch. He pawned the gold watch to pay his landing-fee, and started a bum-boat carrying supplies out to ships, and worked himself up till he owns three or four launches. He says this shipping trade is the same all the world over: it requires a lot of oil.

When I asked him what sort of oil, he said, "Palm oil."

The Americans, he added, work everything on the "pull" system, and he had to get a "pull" with the officials before he could get along at all. They stopped him tying his boats up to the wharves until he saw the man on top and came across with something substantial. Even at that, they were children compared to the Russians.

"There's a Russian warship at Port Arthur," he said, "that only exists on paper. The contractors were paid about a million for building her; money is sent out every month for wages and supplies—and there is no such boat."

When I asked him who got the money he said:

"It never gets out of Russia. I suppose some of the heads get it. Fancy the Russians being smart enough to put a thing like that over! People think they are slow in the uptake, but they're smart enough at uptaking any money. I supplied a big Russian vessel with beef, and when I went to get paid the officer said, 'How many casks of beef?' I said eight. But the officer said, 'No, my manifest says eighteen.' Then he looked pretty hard at me. I got paid for eighteen

casks of beef and I gave him back the price of ten. Then he wanted to charge me ten per cent baksheesh on the price of the eight casks, but I couldn't stand that. They don't care what you charge them so long as they get their cut out of it. Give me a Russian to do business with every time. The English warships are the only ones where they bar highway robbery."

I asked him what he thought of the American Army.

"Good boys, all right. Good tough sorts like our own boys; but there's a lot of them dying with dysentery. They *will* drink bad water. This place is Uncle Sam's hard bargain, if you ask me. The Yanks are paying all the expenses of keeping up this army and they ain't getting any of the business. It's mostly English and Continental capital in these tobacco factories and plantations. The Yanks haven't got anything out of it yet."

We had a look at the Manila races where there were nearly as many breeds of horses as of humanity. Tiny little Manila ponies like microscopic thoroughbreds, China ponies as sturdily built and of much the same shape as hogs, American and Australian horses of every class from thoroughbreds to nondescripts, were ridden by wizened little black boys perched like monkeys up on the horses' necks. They could ride, too. But a lot of them carried long whips like cart-whips with which they sometimes hit the pony over the tail, making him tuck in his tail and go like a scared rabbit for a few strides.

Our racehorses did not thrive up there, or so the American trainers told me. The thoroughbred has been so long in England that he is no longer a tropical animal. The mules looked well. I was to learn a lot about mules later on.

We left Uncle Sam and his problems, and steamed north over a sleepy sea, while behind us the life of Manila still went on: the rush and crowd of the

streets, the caribous (buffaloes) in carts toiling slowly along like barrels on four feet, the Manila men and Chinese sitting in their tiny little shops in the bazaars, often with a gamecock tied by the leg to the counter waiting for an opponent to come along; and towering up above everything the jungle peaks, full of Moros only waiting to get a shot at the soldiers who had come to uplift them and make them men and brothers.

Chapter 7

“Chinese” Morrison

The power behind the throne—*Times* correspondent guides Chinese diplomacy—The world was waiting for England—Was world’s history changed in China?—“Not any more war, thank you.”

We sailed for China in fine weather, but the captain was playing with the typhoonometer, an affair which the engineers said was invented by a Spanish monk at Manila. It is supposed to indicate the existence and direction of any typhoon; and ship captains will sometimes turn round and run back fifty miles to let a typhoon have the right of way. The feud between the poop ornaments and the black squad was suspended for the time being, in the same way that tigers and horned cattle will live together on an island in a flood. Even the Scotch engineers, who do not give away more than they can help, are willing to give “Typhoon Tommy ” some credit for knowledge of this instrument.

September 2nd 1901—Approaching China. The ship was in gloom to-day, for a very old man, a second-class passenger, jumped overboard during the night. He left his watch and chain, a few shillings, and a brief note on the hatchway. One of the grooms who shared his cabin said that the old man had been in the tea trade in England, but had been ruined by the trusts and had come out to Manila to go into the

timber business. He had very little money and no “pull;” also he found that most of the timber land belonged to the Church; so he gave up the struggle and jumped overboard. His married daughter and her husband were on board. The scrap of a note said: “I have decided not to be a burden on the young people.” This deserves to rank with that other great epitaph: “Here died a very gallant gentleman.”

We steamed into Hong Kong harbour through a sea so crowded with junks that the Australian groom asked me: “What are those Chows holding a regatta for?” The chief engineer said they catch fish in every way known to science—and in a lot of ways of their own.

“Some of they junks are pirates,” he said, “and when ye run over a junk at night, or gather up her nets in the propeller, ye don’t stop, y’unnerstand. Ye don’t want any nosty accidents if they get aboard.”

China is a big place in which to find anybody, but by great good luck I ran against “Chinese” Morrison, *The Times* correspondent in China, and from him I got what one might call a very acute angle on the Boxer Rebellion. I had a letter to Morrison from our Scotch engineer, who had known Morrison’s father, as well as Morrison himself, in Victoria.

“Ah wuddent say that he’ll be glad to see ye,” said the engineer. “He’s a nosty conceited jockass—a bit of a freak y’unnerstand. But in his own way he’s the cleverest man I ever saw. The conceit of him! He’s the only white man that unnerstands they Chinese. He learnt the language and, when he went to a meeting of mandarins, an’ they all rigged out in jewels an’ peacock feathers, there was a big seat at the top of the table for the boss mandarin. Morrison walks in and takes that seat an’ not a Chow in the lot was game to call his bluff. An’ him the son of a school-teacher in Victoria! Man, it’d cow ye! If they’d ha’ known, they’d ha’ stuck bamboo splinters

in him till he wuz like a hedgehog. But he gets away wi' it, an' he never tells 'em a lie an' he has *The Times* at the back of him. So the Chows run to him to know whut the Japs are goin' to do, an' whut's the Russians' next move, and the like o' that. Morrison's the uncrowned king o' China; and if he'll talk to ye, ye'll know more about China than these mushionaries and poleetical agents can tell ye in a year."

September 17th 1901—Chefoo. Went off with a guide to visit Morrison. This place is the flowery land all right, for flowers and fruit are everywhere. The Chinese will sell you three pounds of beautiful fruit in a basket for about a shilling, and throw in the basket. Meat here is ten cents a pound, and very fair quality at that. I bought ten silk handkerchiefs for five shillings and sixteen yards of silk material for twelve shillings. My guide (a Russian) talks of the probable war between Japan and Russia. He says:

"De Yappanese dey cannot fight Rooshia. Dey are leedle apes."

Neither man nor beast in China has anything but hatred for the foreigner. As we pass through the little villages and tumbledown humpies of the cultivators the men scowl at us; the dogs snarl and slink off with every symptom of terror and disgust; the cattle snort and shiver if we pass near them; and the mules will watch us uneasily till we go away. The people hate us with a cold intensity that surpasses any other hate that I ever heard of. A fat Chinese shopkeeper, who speaks English, says:

"Poor Chinaman only good for chow (is only fit to be eaten) What does Chinaman savvy?"

Then he adds something in Chinese which causes a laugh among his slant-eyed brethren and which, no doubt, sums up his opinion of the foreigner. The China pony resembles his owners in that he does

everything grudgingly, and has to be hustled and flogged to get him to shift; and in spite of everything he refuses to fall away and get sick as any other horse would do. He keeps fat and vindictive. An owner lending a Chinese pony to a friend says:

“He’s all right. He won’t bite you if you sneak up to him behind the *mahfoo* (groom) and get hold of the rein over his back.”

Many of them have to be blindfolded to get a white man on them, and the bad ones will kick sideways as well as backwards; will strike with either front foot as quickly as a boxer, and when they get a chance they bite savagely. They are mostly bred and broken in Manchuria; and do not come into contact with a white man till they are ten or twelve years old and well “set” in their ways. They live about as long as a donkey—and nobody ever saw a dead donkey, it is said. Before the Boxer trouble their price in Manchuria and northern China was about three pounds ten. But when the world’s armies looked in on China the price went up like shares that had been sold short on a rising market.

I found Morrison at a watering-place outside Chefoo. I knew his record fairly well; for, as a young man, he had explored New Guinea and northern Australia in the days when the blacks were bad. The blacks put a spear into him. He got his black boy to cut off the shaft of the spear, but never had the head of the spear taken out till he got to Melbourne. A man like that takes some stopping.

In person, he was a tall ungainly man with a dour Scotch face and a curious droop at the corner of his mouth—a characteristic I had noticed in various other freaks, including Olive Schreiner, the gifted authoress of the *Story of an African Farm*. Morrison had with him a China-coast doctor named Molyneux who acted as a sort of Dr Watson to Morrison’s Sherlock Holmes. At first Morrison talked mainly

about women, and if there was any unbalance in his mentality it was probably in that direction. I plied Molyneux with questions and thus got Morrison talking. Any answers that Molyneux gave me were annotated and corrected by Morrison, and by the time we had lunch I had got the uncrowned king of China talking freely.

It was an education to listen to him, for he spoke with the self-confidence of genius. With Morrison it was not a case of “I think”; it was a case of “I know”. Of the three great men of affairs that I had met up to that time—Morrison, Cecil Rhodes, and Winston Churchill—Morrison had perhaps the best record. Cecil Rhodes, with enormous capital at his back had battled with Boers and Basutos; Churchill, with his father’s prestige and his mother’s money to help him, had sailed on life’s voyage with the wind strongly behind him; but Morrison had gone into China on a small salary for *The Times* and had outclassed the smartest political agents of the world—men with untold money at the back of them.

A triangular conversation between Morrison, Molyneux and myself ran on the following lines:

PATERSON: “What started this Boxer trouble anyhow?”

MOLYNEUX: “Well, you see, the Boxers—”

MORRISON: “No, it wasn’t the Boxers. You’ve got Boxers on the brain. The Boxers were just a rabble, washermen, and rickshaw coolies. Old Napoleon with his whiff of grapeshot would have settled the Boxers before lunch. The trouble was that the Chinese Government couldn’t handle their job and the whole world was waiting for England to declare a protectorate over the Yangtze valley and stand for fair play and open the door for everybody. All the nations trusted England to give them fair play. You know the old song:

The English, the English,
They don't amount to much;
But anything is better
Than the God damn Dutch.

or the God damn Russian or Turk, or Portugee
either.”

PATERSON: “Would we have had to fight anybody if
we had taken a protectorate?”

MORRISON: “No. Everybody wanted it. You can't
conceive the amount of trade there is here, and
everybody wanted to have a go at it. And it's nothing
to what it will be. There's gold-mines and tin-mines
and quicksilver and all sorts of minerals in the
interior, and it's very lightly inhabited. There's all
this wonderful agricultural land on the coast, and
there are hills all over blue grass, splendid grazing-
land in the interior. I didn't sit on the sea-coast and
write out telegrams. I went in and had a look at it.
But nobody's game to put any money into the trade
because there's really no government in China. The
English missed the chance of a lifetime.”

PATERSON: “The English don't generally miss
much. What made them miss this?”

MORRISON: “Kruger made them miss it. De Wet
made them miss it. They humbugged about over this
Chinese business till they had the Boer War on their
hands. Then they found they were getting a lot of
men shot and dying of enteric to get better terms for
the Johannesburg Jews and the owners of the
Kimberley diamond-mines. So they said, ‘Not any
more war, thank you. We've had some.’ The next
thing was that they had to send men-of-war and
troops here whether they liked it or not. But instead
of running the show themselves and being top dog,
they just had to snap and bite along with the rest of
the pack.”

“They might have taken the job on only for the missionaries,” he went on. “The missionaries all wrote home and said that if the English tried to govern China the dear little converts would all get their throats cut, and they themselves would be *fan kweid* (cut to pieces with knives). But I didn’t suggest that the English should govern China. I said to let the Chinese govern it, nominally, and we could have enough troops here to back them up. Then if any of these Boxers got giving trouble the Chinese would crucify them in the good oldfashioned way and everything would be as quiet as a Sunday-school.”

Here Molyneux chipped in and spoke a piece.

“I have a friend on the staff here,” he said, “and he got the General to write home and say that if we had twenty thousand men we could keep China nice and quiet. He got snubbed by the War office. Then he asked his General to write and say that he refused to accept such an answer from a D.A.A.G. who had never been in China in his life. But the General had to think about his own job. He daren’t go up against the brass hats. So things just muddled along until the Boxers started and besieged the legations in Peking. We thought it was just one of these comic-opera shows until we found that nobody could get out with any news. Such a thing was never known in China before. You could always square a Chinaman to go with a message. So then it was all nations on deck, to hunt the Boxers and to grab what they could by way of indemnity. You ought to have seen the claims for damages! Some of them got civil service catalogues and copied out the lists of furniture and said the Chinese had destroyed the things or carried them away. One man claimed for a mahogany sideboard with fluted columns. He never saw a mahogany sideboard, only in a catalogue.”

MORRISON: “Yes, and who pays the indemnity? Did you ever hear of a policeman arresting a

criminal and then the policeman having to pay the fine? Well, that's what is happening here. The big English firms and the shipping companies, they'll all have to pay extra taxation. There's English money in every sugar-factory in the country, and in every ship that runs up the coast. One Chinese company that carries a million passengers a year—there's English money in that. There's a Russian line that trades here and their ships are all old English ships, not paid for. Those companies will have to dig into their pockets to pay the Japanese and the Germans for coming here to have a little pantomime and call it a war."

PATERSON: "What was the fighting like?"

MORRISON: "Ask Molyneux. He knows all about war. Give him a rifle and a tin of bully-beef and he'd drive the Chinese out of China. The first man shot in Peking was the Chinese tailor, and I've always suspected Molyneux. He owed that tailor a lot of money."

According to Molyneux and other (civilian) experts on war, the allies only had to advance over about fourteen miles of contested country, and the advance was up a river with various boggy creeks flowing into it. Most of the forces had sense enough to walk round the top of the creeks, but the Germans put up trestle bridges which promptly sank in the mud as soon as anybody stood on them. The English had orders to win the war without shooting anybody, as the idea in London was to exhibit humanity and forbearance and get all the trade later on.

"Of course, that was all wrong," said Morrison. "If you want to make an Oriental think well of you you don't want to soft-sawder him; you want to kick him in the stern. The Japanese did more fighting and killed more men than anybody else because they did not worry their heads as to what the Chinese would think of them."

“There was some real fighting at the end of the march,” he went on. “The Japanese ran laughing, and cheering, man after man, on to a bridge that was swept with rifle-fire, and where a mouse couldn’t have lived. They ran up to a gate and laid mines against it, and were shot down, man after man, till at last they blew it down. They’ll be tough gentlemen to tackle in a war. They had a field-hospital up and were treating their wounded while the fighting was going on.”

Listening to this tale of woe I recalled the two English ladies of title in the Boer War, and their biting comments on that enterprise. No doubt the British people, especially the Australians, are prolific in what we got to know in after years as “back-seat drivers”. Perhaps Morrison was a “back-seat driver”. But before I left the China coast I got to know what national prestige means in a foreign country. Previously, I had known only Australia and South Africa. In China I saw the coast crowded with steamships of all flags fighting for trade. I saw the local lines—Jardine Matheson and Butterfield and Swire—running up the coast, and the big Empress boats pulling out from Japan. I travelled on a Russian liner (a British steamship unpaid for) and saw the thousands of tons of produce coming into the China ports by river and rail. A British importer in Shanghai showed me one day’s order—windmills, building materials, stoves, brushes, locks, brooms, and every kind of hardware. I met concession-hunters, bankers and political agents of all nations, each hustling for his own hand and his own country. Perhaps Morrison was right. We should have walked in and taken the boss mandarin’s seat at the top of the table.

Chapter 8

An Unknown Celebrity

International racing—The Swede and the Jap—An Admiral intervenes—Russia gets stung with a horse—Box-wallahs and brass-bound soldiers—Social struggle on China coast.

It was the infallible Mr Kipling, was it not, who told us that most of the credit of England's greatness is due to her unsung heroes, Kelly and Bourke and Shea, who provided most of the casualties and got fewest of the decorations.

After leaving Morrison I ran up against an English soldier of fortune, one MacMillan, a little square-shouldered, bull-headed, thick-necked battler—a sort of Hal o' the Wynd who fought for his own hand. Perhaps not much of a celebrity, but if it were not for such as MacMillan there would not be many celebrities. He had been in Manila, South America, all over China, the Northern Territory of Australia, Singapore, Batavia, and the old country. In default of a better celebrity let us look through the eyes of MacMillan at the welter on the Chinese coast in war-time. When writing of the world's great dog-fight it is worth-while occasionally to get the views of the under-dog. Sitting in the Country Club at Bubbling Well Road, Shanghai, with its hundred yards of bar-counter, built in the form of a hollow square, MacMillan and I listened to a roar of talk like that round the Tower of Babel. Chinese waiters flitted about with drinks ranging from the *apéritif* of the Frenchman to the old brandy which the Russians were drinking as though it were milk.

A high-pitched female voice said: "Boy, bring us two cocktails."

And the Chinaman promptly said: "Yes sir."

Outside, the pat, pat, of tennis-balls and the rattle of a bowling alley occasionally made themselves heard above the roar of conversation.

MacMillan, the hero of a hundred adventures, ran his fierce little eyes over the assemblage.

“Australia’s a stone-dead place compared to this,” he said. “Look at the money they’re spending. Even the Swedes have got money. But there’s a lot going on here that you can’t see with the naked eye. Those women over there with the diamonds like lighthouses, they’re wives of the Taipans. You know what a Taipan is, don’t you?—the head of a big factory or shipping business. Until the army came over, those women ran everything. If anybody wanted to argue, they just pushed his face in. But when the army women came over, they wouldn’t even call on the wives of the Taipans.”

“They said the Taipans were just a lot of box-wallahs, and wouldn’t amount to a row of pins in England. You know what a box-wallah is, don’t you?—a chap that sells goods in the bazaar or carries a pack round. Damn it, they even drew a line at solicitors and said that they wouldn’t call on the wives of attorneys. Can you beat it?”

“I suppose the Taipans got sore, too,” I said.

“Not half, laddie, not half. Of course the Taipans were looking for it, in a way, because a lot of them graduated from behind a counter, and when they got over here and got five or ten thousand a year, they started to throw their weight about. I don’t count for anything financially myself, but I belong to the Wellington Club in England, and when any of the Taipans got putting the boot into me I used to ask him, just casually like, what club he belonged to in London. Most of them belong to clubs sacred to commercial travellers, so they took to letting me alone. They and their women run this club here, and for a time they decided that they wouldn’t admit Swedes. God only knows why they picked on the Swedes, but that’s what they did. Then they said that they *would* admit Swedes, and when about a dozen

Swedes put up they blackballed more than half of 'em, just to show their exclusiveness. And yet any chap from overseas can get made an honorary member so long as he has a collar on."

So there they sat; everybody happy; everybody laughing and swilling cocktails; and yet the worm was gnawing at their hearts. I ordered two more cocktails while MacMillan got his breath.

"You weren't here for the races, were you?" he went on. "There was something doing then all right. There was a beautiful cup given, and the Taipans' wives all wanted it; so they made their husbands enter horses. And the military entered their horses, and there was more fighting over it than there was at the relief of the legations. The military had no money to speak of, but they had a pretty good horse, and he just managed to win, ridden by an Australian fellow named Robin Johnson, an officer in the Welsh Fusiliers. Then the box-wallahs whipped in a protest for foul riding and the fun started. The committee were equally divided—soldiers and civilians—so there was no hope of an agreement."

"Then they referred it to a good-natured old admiral, who had just come out and hadn't joined either clique. I wouldn't have taken it on for a fortune; but then you see I've got to live here. He was as fair as the sun, this Admiral, but he knew nothing about racing. He did the best he could, for he said that, at manoeuvres, a ship had to give another ship at least two clear lengths' sea-room, and the military rider hadn't done that. So he decided against the military. They withdrew all their horses, saying that they would not tolerate a charge of foul riding against a British officer, and that they wouldn't race any more against men who were neither sportsmen nor gentlemen."

"You've heard about the Dreyfuss case in France? Well, there wasn't half as much fuss about Dreyfuss

as there was about the disqualification of this Johnson. Of course, it's all blown over—till the next time—and they're off to the Chefoo races as thick as thieves—and just as likely to fall out.”

Wednesday, September 18th 1901—Went to track at daylight and watched the horses work. There are some English and Australian horses here, also Arabs and Indian country-breds; but most of the racing is done by griffin China ponies. By the rules of the concern every pony must be trained by its owner or a member of the club. The training was described by an English jockey as “a fair masterpiece.”

A China pony, fresh off the grass, is brought in and saddled with considerable difficulty. Then he is allowed to buck round a bit with a *mahfoo* on him till he can be ridden round the track. Next day he is sent a mile gallop against the watch! One hears such dialogue as the following:

“You're not going to try him to-day, are you?”

“Well, no, I only bought him yesterday, and I'll give him another day's training before I try him.”

These ponies are square-built little things, with short necks; solid as pigs; and they gallop with their heads down. The rider can pull at them if he likes—he can please himself about that—it is all one to the pony. By the time he has run a quarter of a mile the pony becomes fit for stratagems and treasons and begins to shirk his job, or to “stink,” as they have it, in the classic idiom of the China coast. Then he gets a good hiding with a cutting whip, and comes in from his gallop determined to do for somebody on the first opportunity. After a time he becomes more or less reconciled to business, for he is well fed, and his life is a lot easier than when he was carrying a Manchurian over leagues of snow. But, as for racing—well, Kipling's man, who tried to hustle the East,

had a better chance than the man who tries to hustle a China pony.

Chefoo races. A two days' meeting. Military and civilians have buried the hatchet. I arrive after a trip on a Russian steamer where the food is fat bacon in steaks, sardines which have been opened for three days, tinned meat ditto, curry slimy with grease, and lukewarm tea. We never saw the captain nor any of the officials at meals. They mess by themselves. Five Russian ladies of easy virtue are moving up the coast on a sort of pilgrimage, going from one port to another, but how they can compete with the local article is a problem. In Shanghai there are two and a half miles of red-light establishments! These wanderers are all sick and lie on deck all day, looking very ghastly, and fruitlessly calling out "boy" at intervals.

I find Robin Johnson here, the Dreyfuss of the Chinese coast. He takes me to the club where a Calcutta sweep is held, the names of the horses being drawn from a hat and then put up to auction. Robin introduces me to a Russian banker, a French importer, and an Italian of sorts—all partners in one horse.

Presumably, Johnson pitches them some very strong tale about me, for, after a while the Russian asks me if I will ride their horse for them next day.

Having had some previous experience of amateur racing, I ask at once: "What's wrong with him?"

"How do you mean what's wrong with him?" said the Russian.

"Well, you wouldn't be looking for a rider at the last minute unless there was something wrong with him. What is it?"

“*Rien, detout,*” says the Frenchman. “Nossing at all! ‘E is a bit ‘ard to—’ow you say monter?— to get on. Zat is all.”

As there are plenty of riders about, it is obvious that this pony has a reputation, and probably has two or three deaths to his credit. Resolving to arm myself with a three-bushel bag to put over this outlaw’s head when mounting, I agreed to take the ride. Then the trio asked me to buy their horse in for them at the auction, and I find that he is a hot favourite. He is named Gilyak, and was the winner of the Peking Derby for China ponies. All of which sounds like apple-sauce to me, for the ponies are better at Peking than they are here, and the winner of the Peking Derby must be a fairly civilized and well-trained animal.

A man would live for a good many years in Sydney without seeing anything like that Calcutta sweep. The vultures of the world, waiting for their feast of Chinese flesh, sat round small tables drinking every drink under the sun, and talking—well, it was nothing unusual to hear a man talking in three different languages to his three companions. Russians (like money) speak all languages, and the Germans are not far behind them. An Englishman is auctioneer, while a Jew records the winning bids, and calls out the amount in the pool. The French have the national aplomb, but the Germans get very excited and yell loud, guttural bids. I am put in to bid for Gilyak, so that the crowd may not know that the owners fancy his chance. But, as Johnson puts it, this crowd were all born with a full set of teeth, and as soon as I start to bid, Gilyak’s price goes up a fiver at a time. Finally I get him for seventy pounds.

After the auction everybody settles down to steady drinking, at which the Russians are in a class by themselves. Even the most seasoned soaks of the British Navy will shudder and turn white when

asked to go to an official dinner on a Russian warship.

“I blame it on our ancestors,” says a British naval officer. “They got civilized and developed a nervous system. When they had nothing to do they would sit and think and worry themselves; but the Russians would just sit. The Russians have got nerves and stomachs like these buffaloes that can eat mangrove-leaves and drink swamp water.”

Next morning I am awakened by a booming of gongs and a noise that sounds like rifle-fire. The Chinese grooms are beating gongs and letting off bunches of crackers by way of propitiating Lady Luck before they go out to the course. We go to the course in a launch and ride Chinese coolies pick-a-back to the beach through the shallow water. The track up to the gates is blocked by hundreds of shrieking, howling beggars, with every malformation and disease known to science. They beat their breasts with clubs, and have to be driven out of the way with whips.

Inside the course the place is alive with ponies, for every young officer of the various forces has bought a pony for the meeting and has “trained” him himself. Fields are very large; but most of the runners stop to “stink” half-way through the job, and the finishes are left to a few honest battlers.

I find Gilyak rolling his eyes and letting fly at anything that comes near him. He looks a stupid, uncivilized brute, very unlike the winner of a Peking Derby, or of any other Derby. Just as the spectators are gathered to see some wild-west business, I hand the three-bushel bag to the *mahfoos*—he has one on each side of him—and with his head in a bag, Gilyak is easy enough to mount. He jumps away well at the start, and we get a lead of three or four lengths, but as soon as a pony comes alongside him he goes into low gear, and is beat to the world before we reach the turn. I refuse to ride him any more. A half-caste

professional rider does no better with him next day. Then it turns out that this pony is not Gilyak at all. The Russian banker and his associates paid £120 for Gilyak, but the Chinese delivered them a green Manchurian pony that they had bought out of a mob for three pounds ten!

“For ways that are dark and for tricks that are vain, the heathen Chinese is peculiar.”

At the start of our race, a Japanese officer, in a very neat rig-out, is carried by his pony into an irrigation drain, where the pony rolls on him and then careers away with bridle flying. Covered with evil-smelling mud, and looking like nothing on earth, the Japanese emerges right in front of a Swede civilian, who looks strong enough to hold an elephant, but can make no impression on his pony's iron mouth. The Swede's pony stops dead and its rider is thrown heavily. Mistaking the Japanese for some sort of coolie, the Swede advances on him with a whip. Heaven knows what international complications might have arisen had not a Frenchman's pony, coming along full split, separated the pair and narrowly missed destroying the Swede. By degrees the loose ends are gathered up; unmanageable ponies are held at the post by their grooms; and the field gets away somehow. One race is set apart for ponies ridden by their grooms, and the ponies behave themselves perfectly under their Chinese riders. The white punters, however, get a shock. They all back what appears to be an unbeatable certainty, only to find that the Chinese riders have put their heads together and backed the biggest outsider on the totalizator. The ways of the Chinese are quite inscrutable. They will fix up a racing swindle, gamble like devils, and then go out and pick flowers.

September 20th—Dined on an American warship as guest of the doctor, who says that the cold winds from the north here would blow the horns off a goat.

The natives do not make any doors or windows on the northern side of their houses. The American officers are much the same as one would meet on an English warship; but a lot of the men join up just to learn trades. Every man has a camera. The doctor says that if their camera fiends had been told that they could take snapshots of the forbidden city they would have relieved the legations any fine day before breakfast.

September 21st—Coming down the coast in a Butterfield and Swire boat. Great contrast to the Russian boat on which I came up. A lot of the passengers are ladies who have been up north for the summer and are coming back with their children and cows and ponies. Butterfield and Swire are fighting for the trade, and on this trip they give free drinks, a thing quite unknown previously. The cautious old Scotch skipper will not comment on the move, but says he is afraid that some passengers may abuse it.

In Weihawei harbour at night. Saw the warships of all nations at anchor using their searchlights like great pencils of flame; and the flickering of helios go on all night long. Might, majesty, dominion, and glory—we have them all in our British warships; and the sight of the British flag in a foreign port is never without its thrill to the wandering colonial. The old Scotch skipper agrees with Morrison. “We should ha’ taken charrge,” he says. “We should ha’ taken charrge.”

Chapter 9

Marie Lloyd

A music-hall star—“They want me to sing standin’ on me head!”—Singers and sharks—a handful of bad money—The Canadian and the bold gendarme—Marie stars at French races—Nearly gets thrown out.

And now, as a relief from military men, let us switch on the portrait of a stage celebrity, in her day better known, perhaps, than any general that ever lived. The judge who asked a barrister “Who is Connie Gilchrist?” would never have dared to ask “Who is Marie Lloyd?”

Sunday, October 13th 1901—Steaming down the China coast in a P. and O. boat. Admiral Curzon Home is on board; apparently a mild-mannered sea-dog, for, like Bret Harte’s “Thompson the hero of Angels,” he is always polite to the stranger. But they say that, when he gets really warmed to his work, neither Cicero nor Demosthenes could have taught him anything in the way of rugged eloquence.

An English major on board is returning from China to his duties in India, where he is in charge of the establishment of a young rajah. He is allowed to spend ten thousand a year as a sort of amusement fund to provide polo ponies, entertain visitors, preserve tigers, and to keep up a cricket team—all with the object of sweating the lust and licentiousness out of the young rajah. The Admiral says that he is sorry that he himself ever went to sea—he didn’t know there were such jobs in the world! This young rajah has only one wife up to the present; but all his wife’s waiting maids are his concubines, and when visiting his wife he picks out a good-looking waiting maid for future reference. He comes of a boozing and womanizing strain, so the major makes him slog into polo and cricket and shooting. About fourteen tigers are shot in a year, and the visitor can either shoot from a *machan* (a platform in a tree) which is perfectly safe; or, if he wants some excitement, he can shoot from an elephant, where the main risk is that the elephant may pull him off and use him as a stepping-stone over boggy ground; or, if he is a genuine dyed-in-the-wool thruster, he can go out on foot with his ride and walk up a tiger in the jungle.

Like many others of the high-caste Indians, this young rajah was a natural horseman, and in two years he and the major, between them, turned out a polo team that won the championship of India. Some of these Orientals have an instinct for horses. A sultan near Singapore went in for racing, mostly with walers, and took to the game so naturally that he ran an old performer as a maiden horse; was detected, and fired out of the Singapore club. It is an education to see polo played by a native Indian team. Good horsemen, with very flexible wrists, they keep the ball in control and pass to each other almost as accurately as fieldsmen will throw a cricket-ball to one another.

At Singapore the great music-hall star, Marie Lloyd, joined the ship. A very virile lady, this, if one may use the word; a Juno of a woman, with the physique of a ploughman, a great broad face, and eyes very wide apart. She walks into a room as a dreadnought steams into a harbour, followed by a fleet of smaller vessels in the shape of sycophants and hangers-on. Her conversation consists mostly of epigram and innuendo. For instance, a lady passenger, travelling by herself, has her belongings shifted across the ship to a new cabin every time that the wind changes, and there is talk of favouritism:

“Ho, what are yer goin’ to do about it,” says Marie. “She sits at the purser’s table, don’t she?”

A wealthy Greek passenger—quite an old man—is always hanging round a very pretty young girl, who is one of Marie’s entourage. Then his attentions cease abruptly. After dinner one night Marie gives me the key to the situation:

“That old Greek,” she says. “Do you know what he had the cheek to do? Did you ever hear anything like it? He wanted to take the little girl a trip with him through Egypt, the old vagabond!”

“And what did you say to him?” I ask, confident that Marie must have said something worthy of the occasion.

“What did I say to him? ‘Let’s see your cheque-book,’ I says. That’s what I said to him.”

Apparently the cheque-book failed to materialize, for Marie, in her primitive way, carried on a sort of vendetta against the Greek; and when a parrot, belonging to a passenger, flew overboard, she saw her chance. Beckoning to one of her hangers-on, she said:

“You go to the old Greek and say: ‘What a pity that bird flew overboard! It was Hurley’s bird, wasn’t it?’ And I’ll come along and say: ‘No, it was the little bad-tempered one that the butcher looks after.’ That’s the Greek’s bird, and he won’t sleep a bloody wink thinkin’ his bird has flew over!”

Some officers’ wives from India asked a solitary male passenger if he would mind moving a few places up the table, so that they could sit together; and Marie had a few words to say on that subject.

“They asked yer to change ger seat, did they? Well, a thing like that would kill me dead, that would—stone dead. D’yer know what I’d ha’ said to ’em? I’d ha’ said, ‘Excuse me, but perhaps when you come out before you must have came in the steerage. You ain’t used to travellin’ first-class saloon.’ That’s what I’d ha’ said.”

Learning that I am some sort of literary person, Marie asks me to write her a song, and adds that she has paid as much as a pound and thirty bob for some of her song hits in London. Then she lets her eye rove over the deck where the passengers are walking in pairs, male and female, as the Lord created them.

“There you are,” she says, “all you want is a good ketchline! What about ‘They’ve all got their little bit o’ muslin.’ Ow would that go?”

No doubt Marie’s vigour and vitality would have made anything go. But it appears that the difficulty is not so much in the songs itself as in the business to accompany the song:

“I’ve sung songs,” she says, “swingin’ in a hammick, and leadin’ a dog, and pushin’ a perambulator. They’ll want me to sing standin’ on my ’ead next. The public is funny. I’ve got a beautiful song about a dyin’ soldier but they won’t listen to it. They like:

Didn’t we ’ave a pantomime
At Folkestone for the day.

They won’t listen to anything ’igh class.”

A great woman, she dominated the ship. Even the captain became merely the person who was navigating Marie Lloyd back to London. The Admiral himself was impressed, and said something to her about his home in England. Marie said:

“Yes, it must be nice livin’ in the country. I’ll look in some time when I’m goin’ past.”

The Admiral, who was the soul of politeness, said:

“You must come and stop with us.” This invitation Marie accepted; and the Admiral, who was a married man, wore a hunted look for the rest of the voyage.

Friday, October 18th—Waiting at Aden to sail. This afternoon a lot of sharks made their appearance, grey-brown shadows lounging lazily along through the water, with their spiteful-looking pilot-fish darting on ahead. They sauntered about, smelling at the floating cabbage-leaves and melon-rinds, and then giving a swirl of their tails and flashing away into the depths.

Marie Lloyd's entourage were mostly London cockneys, and there was great excitement among them.

"Ow, 'ere's a shork! 'Arry, look at the shork! Tell Ted! Ted, 'ere's a shork! Oh, if we only 'ad an 'ook! My, there's a big one!"

A grey patriarch lounged up to a floating cabbage-head, gave it a disdainful toss with his snout, and swirled down again out of sight.

"Ho, they ain't 'ungry! 'E wouldn't eat that bit of cabbage-leaf!"

A naval officer on board had studied the ways of sharks in many waters; had fried and blistered in the survey ships in Torres Strait, where the sharks waited alongside for the ship's flotsam and jetsam until they came to be looked upon as family retrievers. To him Ted laid down the law. "See them," he said, pointing to the pilot-fish, "them's young shorks." Hearing the captain say that they were pilot-fish, he ran after the naval officer and told him. "Them ain't young shorks," he said. "Them's pilot-fish."

"Thanks," said the naval officer. "I'm glad you told me."

Then there was a discussion as to which of the theatricals should go aft to the butcher for a hook and a bit of meat.

"Ted, you've seen more shorks than I 'ave, you go."

Finally, the speaker went himself and came back with a rope, a bit of meat, and a butcher's hook without any barb to it. This was thrown overboard amid the approving yells and deep-throated cheers of the chorus.

“Sling it out further, can’t yer! There’s one ’ere, a great big one! Bring it up ’ere, Alick, where the water’s comin’ out of the ship.”

“There’s water comin’ out ’ere, too,” said Alick.

The hook was not taken at once, so the back-seat drivers got busy.

“Aul it up to the top so they can see it! What’s the good of ’avin’ it down where they can’t see it?”

A boat-load of Arabs came along, hoping to do great business with the crowd at the ship’s side; but even the Arabs were cowed by the frenzy with which they were adjured to clear out of that. “Go away! We don’t want nothin’! Go away! Can’t you see we’re fishin’.”

Then a big shark swallowed the bait and hook and about two feet of line. Like a Greek chorus, the supernumeraries began to give advice as to how to haul him up. The shark, however, calmly bit the line in two and disappeared with all the essential parts of the fishing tackle. The chorus burst forth again, “Ow, ’e’s gorn! Why didn’t you ’aul quicker?”

As nobody cared to brave the butcher for another hook, the rest of the drama consisted of explanations and recriminations; until Marie, who (like John Gilpin) had a frugal mind, made her exit, remarking: “I didn’t get that ’ook from the butcher. Whoever got it ’ll ’ave to pay for it.” Most music-hall stars are supposed not to know the meaning of money. But Marie had worked in a rag-factory for ten shillings a week before she got to the hundred pounds a week stage; and she wouldn’t part with even the price of a butcher’s hook if she could see her way to get out of it.

Friday, October 25th—Left the Suez Canal and plugged through the Mediterranean. Passing a town

in the distance, the Admiral said:

“That’s Regia.”

But Alick, the *lion comique* of Marie Lloyd’s company, said pityingly:

“No, that ain’t Regia, that’s Italy.”

We make some signals and a boat comes off, pulled by a lot of comic-opera Italian sailors, who clamour to know who will pay them. They are referred to the consul, but continue to talk like gramophones and to go through Swedish exercises with their arms and shoulders. Then Alick decides to give them a turn, and he says:

“Ecce signor! Bonifacio de Marco de Campagno! Si Si! Bel Giorno! Saveloy de Marconi! Corpo di Baccho!”

The old pilot looks up at Alick, taps his forehead significantly, and goes through the pantomime of drinking something out of a glass. He is the first man who has scored off any of the theatricals.

Saturday, October 26th—Land at Marseilles, and find that there are races on. A large party of us go out in a tram. Marie gives Alick a nudge, and whispers:

“You shout ’ere and then that old Greek’ll ’ave to shout when we go in at the racecourse.”

Alick produces an English Sovereign to pay the fares of the whole party. The conductor grabs it eagerly and hands over a handful of silver in change.

“There you are,” says Alick. “That’s what it is to be an Englishman! They’ll take an English sovereign anywhere in the world.”

Drove to the races through a glorious avenue of trees, with beautiful houses and gardens everywhere. Motor cars fly past, each with a French poodle sitting on the front seat with the wind blowing through his whiskers. We pass a fat Frenchman and his wife in a little donkey-cart, drawn by an infinitesimal donkey. Everybody seems to take the racing as an amusement, while we take it as a severe mental exercise. The air is crisp and clear, and filled with the aromatic smell of dead leaves as we drive through an avenue of sycamores. About half the crowd gets in free; or rather, they sit just outside the course on a grassy slope where they have a splendid view; for it is only divided from the running by a deep ditch. Here they smoke cigarettes and drink light wines and eat things out of baskets, while their children, in hundreds, roll and play on the grass.

Arrived at the racecourse gates, the Greek somehow ducks out of sight, and Alick has to pay the admission money for Marie and himself. Then it turns out that the silver he got from the tram conductor is all bad money. They say all the bad money in the world comes here sooner or later; and this desperado has unloaded the accumulation of weeks on Alick in return for the sovereign. This ruins the day for Marie, who upbraids him bitterly.

“You call yerself a cockney,” she says, “and you go and take a double ’andful of brum money. Never mind, you might shove some of it on to that old Greek tonight when we’re playin’ cards.”

All the public stands were packed, and it was impossible to see anything. But there was any amount of room on an official stand marked *defendu*, and Marie picked on a young Canadian member of our party to escort her up into this stand. We told her that *defendu* meant no admittance, but she said she was going up, anyway. “If he tells ’em I’m Marie Lloyd it’ll be all right,” she said.

At the top of the stairs her escort was grappled by a gendarme about the size of a weevil, and the pair of them rolled down the stairs with the gendarme's little red legs flashing in the air every time he came uppermost. Nor was it a silent film, for the gendarme yelled, *à moi mes camarades* every time that he hit a fresh step. It took the combined efforts of three gendarmes to secure the Canadian.

The gendarmes were going to put the Canadian in the coop, but he explained that neither he nor his lady friend knew any French, so they embraced him and let the pair of them stop on the stand.

Sitting up there in comfort among the French aristocracy, Marie scorned to notice Alick or the rest of her fellow passengers milling about among the plebeian crowd below. When they came down the stairs, she said to her escort:

"It's a pity you couldn't speak French, you could ha' told 'em who I was."

"I can speak French all right," he said. "I'm a French Canadian, and I can speak better French than any of these coves. But you didn't want to get locked up, did you?"

Marie was so impressed that she fumbled in her bag and gave him a card, marked "Admit one," to the stalls on the opening night of her season in London.

Chapter 10

Phil May

Bohemia in London—Phil and his bulldog—How jokes get into *Punch*—Men who back big productions—Inducement more female than financial—A picture—A drawing for a duchess—"She'll never be able to change that tenner."

Bohemia, the land of lightheartedness, where everybody borrows money and buries trouble. Bohemia, where the inhabitants live by backing one another's bills, and discounting them with the bourgeois and the Philistine. There was a Bohemia in London at the end of the last century, and Phil May was its prophet.

I had known Phil in Australia, where he worked for the Sydney *Bulletin*. I found him living at St John's Wood and firmly established as one of the leading artists on London *Punch*. There are Bohemians of the beer and back-biting variety, but Phil was the genuine article. He earned about two thousand a year and spent three thousand. An extraordinarily skinny man, with a face like a gargoyle, he was a self-taught artist, a self-taught actor; could give a Shakespearian reading as well as most dramatic artists, and could dance a bit if required. He knew everybody in the artistic, literary, and theatrical world, and his Sunday evenings at St John's Wood gathered together the brightest and best of the Bohemians.

Phil welcomed me with open arms, mainly because he had bought a horse which he hadn't seen for a year, and he wanted somebody to ride it. Phil was for ever buying things that he did not want; and he would have bought (on credit) anything from an elephant to an old master when properly approached. Also, like most comic artists, his life was one long and wearisome search for jokes suitable for illustrations. He told me that he kept a locker at the *Punch* office, and went down every week and brought away a hand-bag full of suggestions sent in by the public. Only one suggestion in each bag-ful was any good at all.

"One chap starts his suggestion by saying, 'Draw a Scotch humorist,' and another says. 'Draw an elephant sitting on a flea,' and I'm supposed to draw the agony on the flea's features."

He thought I might have some new Australian jokes. I fired one off at him with the warning that it had probably been done before:

“Never mind if it has, dear boy,” he said. “*I’ve* never done it.”

The theatrical profession, for some reason or another, looked upon Phil May as a kind of Aladdin—he only had to rub a lamp and he could get them jobs. So they flooded his Sunday nights and asked him to see producers, managers, concert promoters, etc., for them. It appeared that half the leg-shows in London were run by wealthy men, who had nothing to do with the theatre business but who put up their money for female rather than financial reasons. One such show was being floated at the time, and May said:

“There’s a syndicate at the back of this show, and every one of the syndicate has a lady friend on the payroll. They thought they’d boost it up by getting Arthur Roberts as producer. Arthur’s a great joke as a comedian, but he’s a bigger joke as a producer. What with the women fighting, and their gentlemen friends interfering, he could get nothing done. At last he tackled a johnnie who was sitting on a table in the centre of the stage, swinging his legs, and talking to a delicate damsel in a domino. Arthur, for once, in a way, was too angry to be funny, so he said: ‘Get to hell out of here, will you! How can I rehearse them with every loafer in London hanging about?’ So the chap said: ‘Well, you can’t rehearse them anyhow. I’ve got a thousand pounds in this show, so I’m going to stop here and talk to it!’”

Phil’s guests were as various as the animals that Noah took into the Ark. Van Biene, the ’cellist, of “Broken Melody” fame, might be seen talking to a little American *siffleuse*. Lewis Waller, the tragedian, and his offsider, Mollison, were heavily

imported for the benefit of three Australian girl singers, all with colds.

Mollison told us that he had arranged with a capitalist to finance a show that he was going to produce, with Lewis Waller in the lead. The capitalist, after weeks of judicious handling, had just been led to the sticking-point. Then an interview was arranged, at which papers were to be signed and cheques handed over. Waller lost his head at the feeling of careless swagger of having five thousand pounds to play with; and when they met, he said to the capitalist:

“Five thousand pounds! It’s all very well, you know, but hardly *enough*, you know. You can lose five thousand in a fortnight. I produced *Bouncing Belle*—lost three thousand in a week. Lost four thousand in three weeks of *Midsummer Madness*. Five thousand’s only a flea-bite, you know. You want fifteen thousand really. Then you can hang on! Then you can stand a siege!” The capitalist’s jaw was dropping all this time, and as each fresh loss was mentioned he went whiter and whiter.

Then Waller made a dignified exit. The capitalist drew a long breath and said:

“Mollison, I don’t think I’ll go in for this.”

At these Sunday night shows, nobody did his own speciality. Instead of doing lightning sketches, Phil May sang sentimental ballads in a pleasant tenor voice. Florrie Schmidt, an operatic soprano, played the accompaniment of “There’ll be a hot time in the old town” for a tragedian, who was making his audiences flood the pit with their tears every night. Back of it all, there was a strain—the strain of the wanted job, of the thousand and one worries of the hard-up professional. Bohemia hid its troubles as well as it could, but there were many little anxious colloquies in corners of the room and many faces

that looked a lot brighter after a talk with a manager or a concert promoter. Phil's Sunday nights got many a poor mime or musician a job.

Phil's proudest possession was a prize bulldog that somebody had given him—the cheeriest, kindest, sloberiest bulldog that anyone ever saw. When we proceeded to sally out at night, Mrs May would always insist that Phil should take the bulldog, hoping that the sense of responsibility and fear of losing the dog would bring him home before daylight. In our peregrinations from pub to pub everybody knew Phil and everybody wanted to shout for him. Americans who recognized him by his portraits would introduce themselves and say:

“Ah must have a drink with Mr Phil May.”

While I was arguing the point, and saying that he did not want any more drinks, the bulldog would brush against somebody's leg; and the owner of the leg, looking down into the cavern of ivory and red flesh which the bulldog called a mouth, would go faint all over. Then there would have to be drinks to bring this man round, and to insure the others against a similar collapse. After a couple of hours of this, Phil would call a cab and say:

“Take this dog home to St John's Wood for me, will you?”

The dog loved riding in cabs, and evidently had the idea that when he entered a cab he had bought it; for if there happened to be nobody at home when he arrived there, he would refuse to leave the cab and the cabman had to sit on the box and wait, perhaps for an hour or two, until Mrs May came home. No wonder that Phil was chronically hard-up!

One night, after the theatres had shut, we went for supper to a restaurant much frequented by the better-paid of the theatrical world. The place was

wreathed in smoke; the jabber was incessant, and there was much hilarity as each celebrity came in. Louis Bradfield, with some of the beauty chorus from the Gaiety Theatre, got perhaps the best “hand”. Then Phil May started to do little caricatures on the backs of the menus. The next thing was the appearance of a waiter, bearing a silver salver, on which lay a ten-pound note:

“The Duchess of So-and-So’s compliments, and she would like to buy one of Mr May’s little sketches.”

Phil took up the tenner and drew a sketch on the back of it—about the sketch the less said the better—and handed it to the waiter. “Mr Phil May’s compliments, and he has much pleasure in presenting the duchess with one of his sketches.”

“Blast her impudence,” said Phil. “She’ll never be able to change the tenner, anyhow.”

On another night we went to the National Sporting Club, a somewhat faded institution, where Phil was in great demand; and it was hard to keep the booze hounds off him. Vacant faces loomed through the tobacco smoke and heavy jowls hung over long drinks. A big Lancashire manufacturer joined our party; a fine, fresh-complexioned, burly man, who seemed a good sort. He said that he had a concession (meaning a contract) to install electric tram-cars in Perth and Ballarat, and that he would make fifty thousand pounds out of it. This seemed terrific, but I believed him. He said that his son was a college-taught fellow, and weak in the chest. Kipling’s sailor man and his son over again.

At the National Sporting Club I met Bob Beresford, whom I had known in South Africa. A curious character, a bland, attractive, gentle personality; so simple-looking—and such a demon! A Queensberry Cup winner, a splendid billiard-player, and the best pigeon shot for money in the world. He talked of

taking some horses out to Australia; but I assured him that there would be no scope for him. He certainly wouldn't come out for amusement, and the racing Australian has less money and is harder to separate from it than his English brother.

Meeting a more sedate if more stodgy acquaintance later on, I was taken to the Junior Carlton for a drink. It takes twenty years to get to the ballot for the Junior Carlton, and membership of the club entitles a man to a reserved seat in heaven—if he ever gets there. So I was greatly surprised to see a particularly blatant Australian making himself very conspicuous among the members.

This man had married money in Australia, and had got into the House of Commons. In fact, he was a pillar of the Conservative party; and this entitled him to membership of the Senior Carlton, a purely political club. The Senior Carlton was under repair, so their members were temporarily accommodated at the Junior Carlton. My Australian acquaintance was displaying himself at the door of the club, strutting around the smoking-room, and ordering the waiters about as though he owned the place. The joke was that he had several times been enthusiastically blackballed from this same Junior Carlton!

My host for the evening was himself an Australian, who had done very well in the South African war. He said: "That fellow is the sort that gets us a bad name. No wonder the barber up in Buluwayo wrote on his door, 'Dogs, kaffirs, and Australians not admitted.'"

Monday, November 26th 1901—After some correspondence, called at *The Times* office to see about some work. Very severe ordeal. Was shown into waiting-room, then piloted by a haughty menial round the whole building because the rules don't allow of anyone going straight up any stairs to the place that he wishes to reach. Those stairs are all

defendu. After having circumnavigated the office, I was shown into another waiting-room. Passed a tranquil hour in meditation, and was then shown in to Moberley Bell, the manager, a fine big personable man. I did not see Buckle, the editor. I suppose he is too busy, keeping his eye on the Sultan of Turkey and the Kaiser. Perhaps he is like the *Pink 'Un* editor, who is supposed not to know his way to the office.

Wrote some verses for the *Pink 'Un*, which they printed, and asked me to call. Here at last, I thought, I will see the real Bohemia. The staff are supposed to live in an atmosphere of bailiffs and intoxication, and there are some very smart writers among them—Pitcher and Shifter and others. Found them a hard-working lot of busy men. Not one of them was drunk, and none of them said anything specially worthy of publication. They are the last line of the Old Guard, the guard that never surrenders. And they are putting up a spirited fight against the introduction of motor cars!—If you don't believe this look up the files of the *Pink 'Un*.

Then John Corlette, owner of the paper, and always referred to as “Master”, was discovered going to the races in a motor car, and the bottom fell out of the *Pink 'Un* policy.

Wednesday, December 4th—Wound up this London trip by attending a public meeting in Hyde Park in favour of General Buller, who has been recalled from Africa. First came four mounted police troopers and then a band. If one starts four mounted police and a band through London there is no trouble in getting a hundred thousand people to sympathize with anything. Temperance societies were conspicuous with their banners, though it is a mystery why a temperance society should wish to demonstrate on Buller's behalf. He has never been what one could call a distinguished advocate for temperance. The crowd streamed along, pausing occasionally to cheer

for Buller and to hoot Lord Roberts. The demonstration did not mean anything except that they were sick of the war. Passing through clubland, a couple of collectors pushed long bamboo poles up to the first-floor balconies, where sat a prime assortment of fat, well-fed old colonels, with swag bellies and port-wine noses. They laughed at the first collecting bag, but were met with a fierce roar of dislike that made the grin die off their faces, and the purple of their noses turn to an ashen grey. They hurriedly dumped some coins in the bag and vanished inside. The crowd were really nasty; it only needed someone to throw a brick through a window and they would have gutted the building.

Passing through the crowd I heard a large hairy ruffian say to a very small man:

“I’ve just been givin’ a chap a sock in the nose for talkin’ nonsense abart Buller. Wot’s *your* opinion abart Buller?”

Soon after I left London Phil May died, leaving nothing for his widow; but the *Punch* people gave her all his original drawings. As Phil May did not leave an enemy in the world, people rushed in to buy the drawings, and the widow cleared something like three thousand pounds by the sale. The Bohemians of London may have had their weak points, but they were prepared to pay their tribute to the greatest Bohemian of them all.

Chapter 11

Rudyard Kipling

Without haste without rest—The world’s hardest worker—
A man of many houses—“You must get things right”—A
genius with no redeeming vices—Kipling and the butcher
—“You must buy Empire lamb”—“It’s their guts they
think about.”

One expects a great literary genius to be in some way a sort of freak: drink, women, temperament, idleness, irregularity of habits—nearly all the great writers of the past have had one or other of these drawbacks, and some of them have had them all. Byron's life consisted mostly of purple patches; and Swinburne was not the hero of the song about the good young man that died. So, when I went to stay with Kipling in England, I was prepared for literally anything. Would he drink? Would he be one of those men who had half a dozen wives with a complementary number of concubines? Would he sit up all night telling me how good he was, or would he recite his own poetry with appropriate gestures?

None of these things happened. We have read in one of O. Henry's books of a citizen of a South American republic, where everybody was "grafting" day and night, who determined to make himself conspicuous by being honest. Greta Garbo, one of the world's great film stars, got pages of publicity by refusing to be interviewed. Shakespeare himself seems to have dodged the publicity man to such an extent that even now there is some doubt whether he wrote all his own works, or whether they were done by somebody else of the same name. Kipling was remarkable in that his life was so very unremarkable.

He hated publicity as his Satanic Majesty is supposed to hate holy water; and in private life he was just a hard-working, commonsense, level-headed man, without any redeeming vices that I could discover. A pity too, perhaps; for there is nothing so interesting as scandals about great geniuses. Though he was a very rich man, I found him living in an unpretentious house at Rottingdean, Brighton. The only thing that marked it as the lair of a literary lion was the crowd of tourists (mostly Americans) who hung about from daylight till dark trying to look over the wall, or waiting to intercept his two little children when they went out for a walk. By having his car brought into

the garden and getting into it from his own doorstep, Kipling was able to dash out through the ranks of autograph hunters even as a tiger dashes out when surrounded by savages.

His wife, a charming and cultivated American lady, was in her own way just as big a disappointment as was Kipling. She did not seek to be a society star, nor to swagger about covered with rubies and emeralds.

“In the States,” she said, “when people push their money in your face, we always wonder how they got it.”

Kipling’s house was a home. And it was a home of hard work, for he allowed nothing to interfere with his two or three hours of work a day. The rest of the time he roved round getting material.

“I must buy a house in Australia some day,” he said. “I’ve a house here, and in New York, and in Capetown; but I’d like to live in Australia for a while. I’ve been there, but I only went through it like the devil went through Athlone, in standing jumps. You can’t learn anything about a country that way. You have to live there and then you can get things right. You people in Australia haven’t grown up yet. You think the Melbourne Cup is the most important thing in the world.”

Motoring in those days was just in the stage when the betting was about even whether the car would get its passengers home or whether the wife would sit and knit by the roadside while the husband lay on his back under the car and had his clothes smothered in dust and oil.

Kipling, it appeared, had a new car coming on trial, and our first excursion was to be a run in this new car. One of the newly-invented Lanchester cars arrived, driven by a man in overalls, who looked like a superior sort of mechanic. He said that his name

was Laurence. When he heard that I came from Australia, he asked me whether I knew his brother in Sydney. It so happened that I *did* know his brother; thereafter things went swimmingly. "I have another brother," he said, "a high court judge here. When I take these cars round for a trial I generally drag in something about my brother, the high court judge, for fear they'll send me round to the kitchen. Sometimes," he added, "I would prefer to go to the kitchen."

Kipling and I piled into the back of the car, with the great man as excited as a child with a new toy. Out we went, scattering tourists right and left, and away over the Sussex downs. We were climbing a hill of about one in five with nothing much below us but the English Channel, when Kipling, possibly with a view to getting some accurate copy about motoring, said:

"What would happen if she stopped here, Laurence?"

"I'll show you," said Laurence. He stopped the engine and let the car, with its illustrious passenger, run back towards that awful drop. I had a look over my shoulder and was preparing to jump when Laurence dropped a sprag and pulled her up all standing. Then he threw in the engine and away we went. I said to Kipling:

"Weren't you frightened? I was nearly jumping out."

"Yes," he said, "I was frightened. But I thought what a bad advertisement it would be for the Lanchester company if they killed me, so I sat tight."

Away we went through the beautiful English lanes, where the leaves swirled after the car, and one expected to see Puck of Pook's Hill peering out from behind a tree. We passed military barracks, where Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd, with their swagger

canes, were just setting out for a walk. We saw the stolid English farm labourers putting in the oak bridge that would last for generations. We saw a sailing-ship ploughing her way down the Channel, and noted “the shudder, the stumble, the roll as the star-stabbing bowsprit emerges.” It was like looking at a series of paintings—and here at my side was the painter.

Earnest in everything that he touched, he pulled the car up outside a butcher’s shop to do a little Empire propaganda. Pointing at the carcass of a lamb hanging in the window, he asked me to guess its weight. Not being altogether inexperienced in the weight of lambs, I had a guess, and he said:

“I’ll go in and buy that lamb, and we’ll see if you’re right; and we’ll see where this butcher is getting his mutton.”

It turned out that I was within two pounds of the lamb’s weight. This seemed to astonish Kipling very much, and he said to the butcher:

“This gentleman comes from Australia, where they do nothing but weigh lambs all day long. You must buy all the Australian lamb you can get, and keep the money in the Empire.”

The butcher, not knowing in the least who he was, said:

“The Empire. Ha! My customers don’t bother about the Empire, sir. It’s their guts they think about!”

This unedifying incident of the butcher may be some sort of guide as to what Kipling’s English contemporaries thought of him. Frankly, they looked upon him as one of these infernal know-all fellows, who wanted to do all sorts of queer things. What right had anyone to come along and suggest that some day there would be a big war, and that

England should be prepared for it? Fancy advocating that we should give more time to drill, and less time to sports! The flannelled fools at the wickets, forsooth, and the muddied oafs at the goals—when everybody knew that all battles were won on the playing-fields of Eton and Rugby!

Kipling, out of his own pocket, bought enough land for a rifle-range, and paid the wages of a retired sergeant-major to teach the yokels drill and musketry, Was he applauded by his neighbours? Not that you would notice it. A local magnate, stodgy as a bale of hay, looked in for afternoon-tea and confided to me that Kipling was undoubtedly a clever man but too unconventional.

“All this business about drilling men,” he said, “is just putting wrong ideas into their heads. I wouldn’t let my men go.”

Later on, in the Great War, he was to know more about it. Kipling himself lost his only son in the Great War, and was asked to write an epitaph to be put on a tablet in the centre of the thousands of war graves. He wrote: “Had our fathers not lied to us, so many of us would not be here.” And who shall blame him? Needless to say, they did not use it.

So Kipling stalked through the land of little men, as Gulliver stalked through the land of the Lilliputians. He would never have made a political leader, for he was less of a quack, less of a showman, and less of a time-server than any public man I ever met. Had he been a spectacular person like Gabriel d’Annunzio he might have led a great Imperialist movement. But he had no gift of speech, and his nature abhorred anything in the way of theatricalism. He wrote of things as he saw them, bearing in his own way the white man’s burden and expecting no fee or reward.

* * * * *

His Work

Kipling carried his earnestness into his work, for he must have everything right. Smoking one evening, he picked up some manuscript, and said:

“Here’s something I am working on, and it brings in your country. Just see if it’s right, will you?”

The verse in his hand was: “The scent of the wattle at Lichtenberg, riding in the rain.” And the lines that troubled him were:

My fruit-farm on Hunter’s River
With the new vines joining hands.

For some reason or another he was worried as to whether these lines were right.

I said that in Australia we would speak of an orchard, not of a fruit-farm; and that we called it Hunter River, and not Hunter’s River. But why worry! He wasn’t writing a geography or a gardener’s guide. Even old Ouida, who was a best-seller in her day, once made one of her guardsman heroes, weighing thirteen stone, ride the same horse to victory in the Derby two years running—and nobody murdered her.

“They should have murdered her,” said Kipling. “Writing things wrong is like singing out of tune. You don’t sing, do you?”

“No. But how could you tell?”

“Nobody that has the ear for rhythm ever has the ear for music. When I sing, the dog gets up and goes out of the room.”

This insistence on photographic accuracy, so unusual in a poet, may have been the one loose bearing in the otherwise perfect machinery of his mind; or it may have been that his training as a sub-

editor had bitten so deeply into his system that he looked upon inaccuracy as the cardinal sin. There was no satisfaction for him in a majestic march of words if any of the words were out of step.

I said to him:

“You ought to be satisfied. You seem to get things pretty right, anyway. How did you come to get that little touch about the Australian trooper riding into Lichtenberg when the rain brought out the scent of the wattles? Inspiration?”

“No,” he said. “Observation. I used to poke about among the troops and ask all the silly questions I could think of. I saw this Australian trooper pull down a wattle-bough and smell it. So I rode alongside and asked him where he came from. He told me about himself, and added: “I didn’t know they had our wattle over here. It smells like home.” That gave me the general idea for the verses; then all I had to do was to sketch in the background in as few strokes as possible. And when you’re only using a few strokes you must have ’em in the right place. That’s why I asked you whether it was right to talk about the fruit-farm and Hunter’s River.”

All very well, but being somewhat in the verse line myself, I knew that only a master could have written those few little verses. Possibly only one man that ever lived could have done it—Kipling himself.

He was sub-editor of a big Indian paper, and all the news of the world came through his hands to be trimmed up and cut down and put under headlines. The worst training in the world for a poet, one would think. Yet, it gave him his crisp, clear-cut style. He thought in essentials, and scorned padding, as a sub-editor should. “The Wake a Welt of Light,” “He looked like a lance in rest,” “Oak, Ash, and Thorn,” “The Joyous Venture.” These are all headlines—not a word wasted. Phil May had this gift of condensation

in art, and Kipling has it in literature. Then, as to his gift of vivid description. Here are a couple of lines from the “Ballad of East and West”, describing the chase of an Indian raider by an officer on a troop horse:

The dun he leaned against the bit and slugged his head
above,
But the red mare played with the snaffle-bars, as a
maiden plays with a glove.

I said: “How on earth did you manage to write that, you who say that you know nothing about horses? It’s just a picture of the way the horses would gallop. You can see the well-bred mare getting over the ground like a gazelle with the big, heavy-headed horse toiling after her.”

“Observation,” he said. “I suppose I must have noticed the action of horses without knowing that I noticed it.”

It must have been the same sort of observation that made him call the pompous heads of army departments “little tin gods on wheels.” The phrase was not new, but like Homer going down the road, he went and took it. Like all great artists, he was quite dissatisfied with his own work:

“If you can write a thing about half as well as it ought to be written,” he said, “then perhaps, after all, you may not have written it so badly.”

I asked him how he came to write Kim with its mass of material and its infinite (and no doubt accurate) detail.

“Oh,” he said, “the material was just lying about there in heaps. All I had to do was to take it and fit it together.”

* * * * *

His Outlook

And now the reader asks, hadn't the man any hobbies? Did he garden or play cards or shoot or hunt or fish? Not a bit of it. He took a great deal of interest in small improvements to his property, such as you may read about in *Puck of Pook's Hill*, but I think that was mainly on account of the enjoyment he got from watching the habits and customs of the English agricultural labourer, as set forth in the same book. His sight was too bad to allow him to race over raspers in the hunting-field or drop a dry fly over a rising trout: hence his nick-name of Beetle in *Stalky & Co*. His only hobby was work. And like Goethe's hero he toiled without haste and without rest. Look at a collection of his works and you will get some idea of the urge that must have driven him to keep working. At the age of forty he had written more books than most men write in a lifetime, and not a line went into one of those books that he did not verify. True, he did once describe the Maribyrnong Plate as a steeplechase; but if he had had an Australian turf-guide at hand, he would have corrected the error. I have already quoted the Scotch engineer's objection to Kipling's description of the destroyers lying in wait for their prey in the swirl of the reefs—"and they drawing six feet forrard and nine feet aft." But did not Shakespeare once locate a navy in Bohemia or some other inland country. Apart from his literary work, he felt that the white man's burden was laid on him to advocate in every way this bringing of the British peoples under Empire council, with India as a sort of apprentice nation until it learnt to govern itself. In view of what has happened lately, he might have also questioned the ability of the white parts of the Empire to govern themselves; but he said that, when the Australians grew up, and when the young Africans forgot to be Dutch, there would be such an empire as the world never saw. By way of contribution to the debate, I suggested that the Australians would always put Australia first, and that the young Africans did not

care a hoot about the Dutch—they were Afrikaners first, last, and all the time. But the only motherland he had known was that “grim stepmother,” India, and he could not conceive that South Africans or Australians would study the interests of their own territories when they might be partners in a great empire. One must concede it to him that he took a large view.

As to the Indians, he said that the Indian peasant could neither understand nor make any sensible use of self-government; and he wrote all sorts of nasty things about the British M.P.s who wandered over to “smoodge” to the Indians. He would cheerfully have seen them get their throats cut.

Chapter 12

Captain Glossop

Captain's own story of Emden fight—“Thank God, we didn't start the war”—A sailor talks to the point—English and Australians work together—Discipline in the Silent Service—A little affair in Mexico.

November 1914—En route for the Great War as a correspondent. We have two battalions of infantry on board. A topsy-turvy force this, for the Brigadier, General MacLaurin, has never seen any active service, while the ranks are full of English ex-service men, wearing as many ribbons as prize bulls. These English ex-service men, by the way, volunteered to a man when the war broke out, and the Australian ranks were full of Yorkshiremen, Cockneys, and Cousin Jacks. Every one of them had the fixed idea of getting a transfer or clearing out and rejoining his old regiment as soon as he got to England. Who can blame them? It is the English way. Any one of them would sooner be shot as a private in the Coldstream Guards than get a decoration in a nameless Australian force. By the end of the war, we ourselves had a tradition.

Fortunately, this expedition was halted in Egypt for training, so they had to stick to the show whether they liked it or not. When we talk about the glories of Gallipoli we should give credit to the fifty per cent or so of Yorkshiremen, Cousin Jacks, Cockneys, etc, who did their share in it.

At sea—Leaving Australia. Among the officers there are many be-medalled men. When any debatable question comes up, they pout their chests at MacLaurin and say they never did it that way in their old regiments. For instance, one hero named Lieutenant Magee was ranching in Mexico, when Pancho Villa came along and commandeered all his men and horses. Being left on his beam-ends, so to speak, Magee was wondering what he would do next, when Villa said: “Why not come along with us? Do you know anything about fighting?” It so happened that Magee had done some volunteer artillery work, and Villa said: “You are the very man I want. I have just captured two guns and I have nobody that can work them.”

Magee had a great time working those two guns, shooting at all and sundry, until one day he went down to headquarters and found nobody there but the General and his staff. All the troops had cleared out and joined some other general. Knowing that all captured officers were invariably shot, Magee hopped on to a horse and never stopped going till he reached the coast.

“What did you do with the guns, Magee?” I asked.

“I left them in the middle of the road. I expect they are there yet.”

Another officer, a Major MacNaughton, had served in a crack Highland regiment, and had led the troops up the heights of Dargai or some other inaccessible and dangerous place. He persisted in wearing a Highland bonnet in defiance of an order that no

equipment was to be worn other than that laid down by the Australian regulations. MacLaurin, however, was by way of being a bit of a Highlander himself, and a born, natural soldier. For instance, he took hold of that rough outfit and made the troops stand to attention when another transport was going past.

A New Zealand transport came close alongside, with the men cheering, beating tin pans, and yelling out, "Hello, Digger."

Not a word out of our lot, not a move of a muscle: and the New Zealanders went off saying: "You b—! You're too flash to speak to us, are you?" By and by, it seeped into the intelligence of the officers commanding the various transports that this was the correct thing to do; and before we got to Egypt they were all doing it. MacLaurin put Magee under arrest for being late on parade; and, having occasion to send for MacNaughton, he said:

"How dare you appear before me improperly dressed? Go and put your cap on, and don't let me see you wearing that thing again."

This, from a man who had never seen any service, to the hero of a hundred fights! MacLaurin straightened everything up, and these two officers became his admirers. Magee said: "When I first joined this outfit I thought that this Brigadier was just about able to take a salute. Now I prophesy that he will command a division before the war is over."

Unfortunately, MacLaurin and his brigade major were both killed by a shell almost as soon as they landed on Gallipoli.

Among our personnel was a gigantic lieutenant named Massie, an international cricketer, strong and rugged as an iron-bark tree. By some freak of fortune he had been made adjutant of his battalion

though he knew no more about military routine than he knew about flying. His first question was:

“How am I to mount guard, when we haven’t got any horses?” But by sheer personality and common sense, he managed to make a success of his job. He had a string of officers after him all day long, with troubles and questions.

“They’ve taken the table out of our orderly room, Jack.”

“I caught a fellow cutting some rope out of the rigging to dry his washing on, Jack.”

“A chap’s hat blew overboard, Jack. How do I get him another?”

Luckily the brigade adjutant was a regular, Lieutenant King, of the King’s Liverpool regiment, and by doing the three men’s work this King managed to keep the show going; aided largely by the English ex-service men, who love a regular officer but felt it below their dignity to be bossed by volunteers.

It was through friendship with Massie that I got in touch with a celebrity—the man who commanded an Australian warship in the first fight fought under the Australian flag. It is not often that we get from the silent navy an account of a fight from the lips of the man who fought it.

November 15th—Colombo. Arrived in Colombo to find everybody in a wild state of excitement over the sinking of the *Emden* by the *Sydney*. We can hardly believe that Australia’s first naval engagement could have been such a sensational win, for our people are not sea-going people and our navy—which some of us used to call a pannikin navy—was never taken very seriously. And now we have actually sunk a German ship!

Colombo harbour is a wonderful sight with warships, transports, merchantmen, Japanese, Russians, English and Australian ships. There is the Russian man-of-war, *Askold*, reported sunk in the Russo-Japanese War, also reported sunk by the *Emden*, and that she sank the *Emden* in this war; *Abouki* (Japanese), *Hampshire* (English), and, best of all, alongside the long breakwater the four funnels—the two centre funnels with white streaks round them—of the *Sydney*. It sort of wakes us up to the idea that we have a country.

Our troops are not allowed ashore lest in their exhilaration they should take Colombo to pieces. The Colombo streets are full of New Zealand Tommies and officers, hundreds of them. They are a fine lot of men, well turned out, and with black boots like the English ammunition boot. They are not enjoying the war, for their General is even a worse “nark” than ours. They are not allowed beer or cigarettes on board their transports. Fancy going to war without beer or cigarettes! Their General is named Godley, but they call him un-godly. Their ranks, like ours, contain a large proportion of men who are not New Zealanders at all, but are soldiers of fortune who have joined up in search of adventure. One of these men says that Godley was not to blame for the beer and cigarette order; that it was done by the New Zealand public, whom he describes as a lot of “narrow-minded, persecuting, canting, Scotch hypocrites.” This comes of cutting off a man’s tobacco.

General Godley, by the way, afterwards proved himself a very fine soldier, and made a great name for the New Zealanders at Gallipoli. All over the world it is the same—the rougher the general, the better the troops.

The gigantic Massie offers to take me off to interview Glossop, the hero of the *Sydney-Emden* fight. Massie’s people are of considerable importance in

Sydney and he has entertained Glossop at his house; so, he says that if I go with him and listen to what Glossop says I may get some stuff that the other correspondents wouldn't get. This Massie is about six feet two in height, broad in proportion, and he must be all brains. Any man that can make a success as adjutant of a raw battalion, without any previous experience whatever, can do anything.

We find Glossop in mufti, having a drink by himself, a typical English sailor-man, not a bit excited by the fact that he has "woke up to find himself famous:" to him the whole affair is a matter of range of guns, weight of metal, speed of ship, and of course a good deal of luck.

"Well, Massie, I had a lot of luck, didn't I?" he says. "Fancy her coming to Cocos just when we were right on the spot, and fancy just having the luck to be on that side of the convoy. If I'd been on the other side, then I wouldn't have got the job. Of course I had the speed of her and the guns of her, but if our people hadn't served the guns properly or if she'd dropped a shell into our engine-room, we might have been sent to the bottom instead of her. You can work out a fight on paper, and one shell will upset the whole calculation."

"She had no idea that there was any vessel of her own power in that part of the Pacific, and she came out looking for a fight—and she got it. She must have got a surprise when she found she had to fight the *Sydney*; and I got a surprise, too, I can tell you. When we were about ten thousand five hundred yards apart I turned nearly due north so as to run parallel with her, and I said to the gunnery lieutenant that we had better get a thousand yards closer before we fired. I knew the *Emden's* four-point-one guns would be at their extreme limit at ten thousand yards, and I got a shock when she fired a salvo at ten thousand five hundred and two of the shells came aboard us. That's modern gunnery for

you. Fancy one ship, rolling about in the sea, hitting another ship—also rolling about in the sea—six miles away! She must have elevated her guns and fired in the air, for we were technically out of range; but it was great gunnery.”

“Her first salvo was five guns, of which two shells came aboard us. One shell burst and carried away the after-control, wounding all the men, including Lieutenant Hampden, but no one was killed. The other shell passed within six inches of the gunnery lieutenant and killed a man working a range-finder, but it never burst. There was luck again for me—I was in that control and if the shell had burst I suppose I would have been a goner.”

“There was a boy of about sixteen in the control working a telescope. When the shell landed he was stunned by the concussion and was lying under the body of the man that was killed. As soon as he came to himself he threw the man’s body off him and started looking for his telescope. ‘Where’s my bloody telescope?’ was all he said. That’s the Australian Navy for you.”

“The whole thing didn’t last forty minutes, but it was a busy forty minutes. She tried to get near enough to torpedo us, but she could only do seventeen knots and we could do twenty-seven, so we scuttled out of range. The *Emden* had a captured collier called the *Buresk* hanging about, trying to get near enough to ram us, and I had to keep a couple of guns trained on this collier all the time. We hit the *Emden* about a hundred times in forty minutes, and fourteen of her shells struck us but most of them were fired beyond her range and the shells hit the side and dropped into the water without exploding.”

“When the *Emden* made for the beach we went after the collier, but we found the Germans had taken the sea-cocks out of her so we had to let her sink. They were game men, I’ll say that for them.”

“Then we went back to the *Emden* lying in the shallow water and signalled her ‘do you surrender.’ She answered by flag-wagging in Morse ‘we have no signal book and do not understand your signal.’ I asked several times but could get no answer and her flag was still flying, so I fired two salvos into her and then they hauled their flag down. I was sorry afterwards that I gave her those two salvos, but what was I to do? If they were able to flag-wag in Morse, they were surely able to haul a flag down. We understood there was another German warship about and I couldn’t have the *Emden* firing at me from the beach while I was fighting her mate.”

“We waited off all night with lights out for this other vessel, but she never showed up, and then we sent boats ashore to the *Emden*. My God, what a sight! Her captain had been out of action ten minutes after the fight started from lyddite fumes, and everybody on board was demented—that’s all you could call it, just fairly demented—by shock, and fumes, and the roar of shells bursting among them. She was a shambles. Blood, guts, flesh, and uniforms were all scattered about. One of our shells had landed behind a gun shield, and had blown the whole gun-crew into one pulp. You couldn’t even tell how many men there had been. They must have had forty minutes of hell on that ship, for out of four hundred men a hundred and forty were killed and eighty wounded and the survivors were practically madmen. They crawled up to the beach and they had one doctor fit for action; but he had nothing to treat them with—they hadn’t even got any water. A lot of them drank salt water and killed themselves. They were not ashore twenty-four hours, but their wounds were flyblown and the stench was awful—it’s hanging about the *Sydney* yet. I took them on board and got four doctors to work on them and brought them up here.”

“I’ve seen my first naval engagement, Massie; and all I can say is, thank God we didn’t start the war.”

We left Captain Glossop to handle his very turbulent lot of prisoners and went back to our ships. The next night a message came that the *Sydney*, with the German prisoners on board, would pass us at sea about two o'clock in the morning. The Brigadier ordered that all ranks should parade and stand at attention as she went past: an order that started a lot of grumbling among the recruits until a Yorkshire ex-sergeant-major said:

“Tha’ll be proud, laad, some day to say that tha’ did it. Yesterday ye were nowt but a handful o’ blacks; but the world’s talkin’ about ye to-day.”

Under the tropic night the ghost of a warship glided by and all ranks on our transport fell in and stood at attention until she had passed out of sight. A formality, perhaps; but it might have satisfied even Mr Kipling that we were growing up.

Chapter 13

Lady Dudley

A woman of much importance—Her feud with the doctors
—Lady Dudley beats the army—But goes down to the
Irish—Trouble in a base hospital—The matron and the
Countess—Great consultants and their ways.

And now, as a contrast to the swashbuckling Marie Lloyd, let us consider another woman of finer material, but with, perhaps, even more of steel in her composition. Not that she looked like it; for it was hard to imagine a more beautiful, cultivated, and altogether feminine woman than Rachel—Lady Dudley. But when it came to getting her own way, she displayed a single-minded determination that marked her out as one far above the ordinary level of female humanity. This hurried sketch will show how, single-handed, she fought the whole administrative side of the British Army.

During the earlier part of her residence in Australia as wife of the Governor-General, Lady Dudley showed no symptoms of being different from any other Governor-General's wife. She opened bazaars and shook hands enthusiastically with children who had won prizes for recitation. And, as it is usual for a Governor-General's wife to take up some special line, to patronize some special movement, with which her name may be forever identified, Lady Dudley decided that she would establish all over Australia a chain of bush nurses—trained women who would be ministering angels to the poor and sick in the back-blocks. The idea involved the expenditure of a lot of money; but there was plenty of money about at that time. The scheme would have gone through with a bang only that the medical profession, for once, sank all their internecine feuds and combined against Lady Dudley.

Under her scheme the nurses would be responsible only to God and to Lady Dudley, and the medical profession saw themselves being called in to treat (for nothing) cases that had, perhaps, been wrongly diagnosed and wrongly treated by these well-meaning women.

“We can kill plenty of people ourselves,” said one doctor, “without having to step in and finish off the nurses' mistakes.”

It was suggested that the medicos would withdraw their opposition provided that all cases were reported to them in the first instance, and that the nurses worked under their directions. Her Ladyship flatly refused to concede an inch; whereupon the big subscribers held off or only sent cheques for a couple of guineas and the scheme seemed doomed to an early and ignominious death.

I was not without some sort of notoriety in my own country at that time, so I was more puzzled than surprised when I received a command to wait upon

Lady Dudley at Government House. What could her Ladyship want with me? Did she want me to write an ode in favour of bush nursing?

I went down and was shown into a private parlour. Lady Dudley came in; a singularly beautiful woman, graceful, and with a voice that had the range of an organ and had been carefully trained by professors of elocution. Portraits of deceased governors looked down from the walls; menials in uniform moved noiselessly about, and there was nothing in the world to show that a fight was on.

“You have heard of my scheme Mr Paterson,” she said, “and of the opposition there is to it. Now, I am determined to go through with it. You are well known among the bush people, and I want you to organize a trip for me through all the back-blocks towns. I will live in the Governor-General’s train, and I will address meetings and ask for subscriptions in every centre, even in the small places. I will get twenty thousand pounds without any trouble. Will you help me to do it?”

I had done some back-blocks touring, and pictured to myself this delicately-reared woman addressing bush audiences, night after night, in smelly little country halls with the thermometer at a hundred and ten. I knew that the local doctors would warn all the wealthy people to keep their money in their pockets as the scheme was sure to fail. But such was my admiration for her pluck that I would have gone with her had it been in any way possible for me to do so. I felt quite ashamed that I had to back out of it, but there was no alternative. The tour never came off, because Lord Dudley shortly afterwards left Australia. Still Lady Dudley did manage to establish a few nurses in spite of hell and high water.

So much by way of introduction of the star character in this scenario. Let us get back to the diary.

December, 1914.—Arrived in London in hopes of going to the front as a correspondent. About the first man that I met was one of my old South African confrères of the *Daily Mail*. Since our South African days this man had risen from the position of war correspondent to that of leader writer, and instead of telling generals what to do he told the world what to do. But the position in 1914 cowed him. I said:

“How are things? Not too good are they? Are the duchesses still pulling the strings behind the scenes?”

“Oh my God, no,” he said. “This thing is too deep for duchesses. They have all dropped the strings and have fled away like brightly-coloured jungle fowl, afraid even to screech lest the screeching should draw attention to themselves. Nobody wants to stick his head up and shout his views over this business lest he get his head knocked off. Even the great panjandrum in our office is keeping his mouth shut, and that has never happened before in my knowledge. Things are too serious. Go down to the War Office and see what they’re up against. But I can tell you straight away that you have no chance of getting over to France. They’ve got plenty of troubles without handling correspondents.”

Whoever saw London in 1914 can never forget it! A stricken city, cut off from all reliable news, with everybody working feverishly to organize an army over night. Where we had one machine-gun the Germans had twenty; and so on, right through the piece. No wonder the Germans swept our “contemptibles” before them in the first onset.

December 14th.—London. Went to the War Office to see what chance there is of getting to the front. Found the waiting-rooms and passages absolutely blocked by old generals, old colonels, young and old civilians, who all want to do something, or to give

something—And they all want to get to the front. I want to get to the front myself.

The War Office tries its best to cope with this avalanche of enthusiasts. As each man comes in, his name and business is entered in a book, and one of an army of small boys is sent upstairs to see if anyone in authority will grant the caller an interview. Usually, the business is anything from ten days to a month in arrear; so the caller is asked to come back some other time. This he does, day after day, without seeing anybody. He won't give it up either; he keeps at it; a man who has been at the War Office all day long, every day, for ten days is comparatively a newcomer. The civilian who wants to present a thousand-pound car to the army so long as they will let him drive it at the front; the retired colonel who will take over a thousand pounds worth of gifts to the troops, if they will let him distribute them at the front; the elderly civilian accountant who offers to give a thousand pounds to the Red Cross, if they will only allow him to go over and keep their books at the front; the entertainer who wants to go over and sing comic songs to the troops; all these people are just passengers in a war, and in a war like this there is no room for passengers. I wrote to Sir Archibald Hunter with whom I had been friendly in South Africa to ask if he could get me to the front in any capacity. He said he couldn't get there himself.

December 15th.—Dropped in for a chat with Sir T. A. Coghlan, our agent-general for New South Wales. As unemotional as a professional billiard player, and as self-reliant as a sea captain, Coghlan has battled his way from a minor civil service job to his present position through sheer ability. Many years of dealing with statutes, orders, and regulations have rendered him rather superior to the trammels of red tape. After considering the matter for a while he says:

“I can get you over to France. But if you write one word for a newspaper, or if you tell anybody that you’ve ever been inside a newspaper office, you’ll deserve all that’s coming to you. If you go over there and lie low for a while they may let the correspondents go to the front later on. There’s an Australian hospital over there, Lady Dudley’s hospital they call it, and we have a man there in charge of a government ambulance. He wants to come home; so you can go over and take his place. You’ll see something too, let me tell you; for of all the troubled outfits that I ever had to handle, this hospital beats the lot. It’s a first-class hospital, don’t make any mistake about that, but its adventures would make a book. Colonel Eames is in charge. You know him well, don’t you? I wouldn’t have Eames’s job for a fortune.”

“What’s up with it?” I asked. “Who’s running it? Is Lady Dudley running it?”

“Well, not exactly. But a lot of its success, and a lot of its trouble are due to Lady Dudley. There’s a wonderful woman for you. Beauty, social position, everything. But she’s a Quaker by birth. Comes from that Gurney family of bankers; and if you want a real good stubborn fighter get a Quaker (Coghlan was a good Roman Catholic himself.) The hospital is run by a committee, mostly women. They’re all snobs and they’ll do anything fair or unfair, that Lady Dudley says. It’s a petticoat-ridden outfit.”

“Everything went queer from the start with this thing,” he went on. “They called a meeting of Australians in London to form the hospital, and most of the rich Australians over here either went there themselves, or sent their wives and cheque-books. The wives were so excited at having anything to do with Lady Dudley that they would vote anything she wanted. Of course, everybody wanted to get a job on the hospital (so that they could say they had been over to the front) or they wanted to

work some friends in. They called for promises of money and Robert Lucas Tooth, a very wealthy old Australian, promised ten thousand pounds; others chipped in as much as they could. They had no trouble in getting the money. Then the question came up about a secretary to the hospital. Everybody there thought that he or she would make a good secretary; but they were waiting to see what Lady Dudley wanted. Then Robert Lucas Tooth chipped in and said that he had a lady friend, a Mrs Popplewell, who used to be a professional singer and he thought she would make a very good secretary. In fact he made it clear, no lady friend no ten thousand pounds. They couldn't toss that much money overboard, so the lady friend went. Everything worked by the rule of contrary in this show and though she had been a professional singer she has turned out to be a good commonsense capable woman. Works like a beaver; keeps her eye on the accounts; sees that no money is wasted, and is cheerful all the time. One of the best. You'll see her when you go over."

"Then the next thing was: who was to command the hospital? Lady Dudley had a consultant from Melbourne who had attended her in Australia and she thought he ought to be head of the hospital. He'd have gone in with a record majority only that the War Office would not accept any hospital unless it was under a man who had held a hospital command in war-time. So Colonel Eames got the job. He was head of a hospital in South Africa. You know all about him. There was no trouble about the medical staff; London was full of Australian doctors and nurses and they all volunteered. But when it came to the rank and file—good Lord, you never saw such a scramble in your life! Some of the richest men in London are over there washing out bedpans and carrying coal and cleaning up pots and pans."

"But where does Lady Dudley come into all this? What had she to do with it?"

“I’ll tell you what she had to do with it. The army daren’t refuse a hospital, but they didn’t want it at the front. They had plenty of hospitals, and they couldn’t feed the fighting men or keep the guns and ammunition up to the front line. But Lady Dudley moved her hospital down to the coast and managed to get an order from some old bath-chair general or other that they were to embark for France. And she got it over there in spite of the War Office. Then, when they decided to put Eames in charge she still stuck to it that she wanted her civilian consultant to be in charge. We told her that Sir Arthur Sloggett wouldn’t stand it—he is the big man in the Army Medical organization. All she said was: ‘I haven’t the pleasure of knowing Sir Arthur Sloggett.’ Just as if he didn’t exist, you know.”

“When she got her hospital to Boulogne in the teeth of the whole British Army she wasn’t satisfied. Not a bit of it. She went off to Paris, no less, taking this consultant with her and she tried to start a branch hospital in Paris where she could run things her own way. Well, you know how things are in France—not a mouse can stir there but somebody wants to know what he is doing. So the French medical heads wrote to the British medical heads to ask what was the big idea about starting an Australian hospital in Paris.”

“There’s no end of a row about it; it is quite on the cards that the hospital may be sent home. You may be just in time for the big bust-up. Let’s go down to the office and see about your passport.”

Wednesday, December 23rd.—At Australian hospital, Wimereux. Found Colonel Eames going on his tranquil, unhurried way, much as I had seen him in the South African war. Also met Doctor (later Sir Alexander) MacCormick. I had lived with him for some time under a Cape cart in the Boer affair. Others of the staff were Dr Thring, a leading Sydney surgeon; Dr Herschell Harris, an X-ray specialist; Colonel Horne of Melbourne; Dr Dick, an authority

on hospital sanitation; and several young doctors—McDonnell of Forbes, New South Wales; Reynell, a Rhodes scholar from Adelaide; and Patterson, Gardner, and Wallace of Melbourne. All these young men had been taking post-graduate courses in England when the war broke out and there was no ailment known to the human body but somebody on the staff was a specialist at it. Sister Grieve, the matron, was no stranger to the job of handling a big hospital; and the nursing staff had mostly got their experience in Australian hospitals where they had to do without quite a lot of things that most nurses require. They were fit for any amount of work if they could only get it. For a time next to no patients were sent in and the consultants had thoughts of resigning and looking for work elsewhere. Lady Dudley, as patroness of the show, was very much upset at the non-success of “her” hospital and recommended to the committee that although Colonel Eames must perforce remain in nominal charge, the work should be divided and that Eames should become a sort of wood-and-water-joe looking after the men’s boots and the supplies and routine work of the hospital, while one of the consultants took charge of the medical and surgical operations.

The fight was on in earnest, and it was a case of root hog or die with Eames, who looked like being deprived of the command of his own hospital. Nor could the army authorities help him. They could not interfere with the inside workings of a private hospital so long as it conformed to the letter of the law.

The hospital was in two buildings—a big château and a golf-club, the latter on the edge of the Wimereux links. Here the staff possessed their souls in what patience they could, playing golf accompanied by small French caddies who talked about *les sales boches* and counted the years till they could get to the war. To these golf-links came the heads of the

British Army Medical corps and the important English consultants all anxious to help Eames, but not knowing how to do it.

The committee had control of the funds and without funds the hospital could not live for a day. Just as things were at their blackest there came an unexpected ray of hope. Colonel Eames was an Irishman, a product of Dublin University, and one of the few men in the world who was a double international—he had played both Rugby and soccer for Ireland. All the Army Medical heads were Irish—in fact one might say that almost all army doctors are Irish—and Eames had taught many of them to row and to play football. They gathered in the golf-house and faced the situation. Lady Dudley was at last up against foemen worthy of her steel, for she was up against the Irish.

By way of an opening gambit Colonel Eames received a “please explain” asking him to say why one of his consultants had been disporting himself round Paris trying to start a hospital; and whether this had been done with his knowledge and consent. To this he replied, truthfully, that he had not given any such leave nor sanctioned any such proceedings. This report went from one Irishman to another, and each of them wrote something on it, till at last it emerged in the shape of an order that this consultant should leave the hospital and should not return until further orders. The situation was saved.

Christmas Day.—The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. This hospital which was nearly chased out of France has become a sort of rendezvous for all the great consultants of the military medical world. They like to come here because it is not a military hospital, and they can let themselves go on the subject of military management in general and hospital management in particular. As soon as a war starts, everybody becomes a back-seat driver.

Among the guests at our mess on Christmas Day was Sir Almroth Wright, a big, spectacled Irishman with a fine leonine head. He was a lecturer at the University of Sydney; but they let him go because they didn't think he was worth a salary of (I think) six hundred a year. He now makes ten thousand a year in London and has been sent over here to investigate the causes of infection in the soil of the trenches.

With him was Sir Bertrand Dawson, another great specialist, quite a young, fresh-looking man, and Makins one of the leading surgeons of the world—a hatchet-faced, inexpressibly shrewd old fellow who looked as though he might have been an ambassador or an Irish car-driver. Another guest was Burghardt, a leading light in the London medical world and a comparatively youthful-looking man. With him was Watson-Cheyne, always known as “Watch-and-chain,” These are all consultants and their job is to tell the common herd of doctors what to do. In their own practices they go all over England to advise on obscure cases—it is said at a minimum fee of a hundred guineas a visit. But here the Tommy and the general are all one to them. With them are several younger doctors who have not yet got to the hundred-guineas-a-visit stage, and who sit very silent, like subalterns in a cavalry mess.

These heavy-weight medicos chuckle to themselves on their victory. One of them says to me:

“Lady Dudley is a very fine woman but she has had everything done for her all her life, and she has no idea of the value of money nor the value of men. If the aristocracy would be content just to exist beautifully—like the man in Du Maurier's picture in *Punch*, we would get on all right. But no, they must butt in and try to boss things for themselves. There's another hospital here run by a peeress, the Sutherland hospital; and they're having more troubles than this Australian crowd.”

Even more important than these consultants are the heads of the Army Medical Corps. Sir Arthur Sloggett, a typical army doctor; Colonel Shanahan, a tall sinewy Irishman with a monocle which never leaves his eye; and Captain Smith, the embarkation officer. Smith, of course, is Irish; very witty, and important to us, for he allots the patients to the hospitals and can give us all the “good,” that is the dangerous cases. What a change had come over the scene. The wounded were pouring into Boulogne as an aftermath of the Mons operations and Captain Smith packed our hospital with cases to celebrate our escape from petticoat government. All the beds were full; and men at the last stage of exhaustion, hovering on the edge of death from their wounds, had to lie on stretchers in the hall-ways and passages till something could be arranged for them. Patiently, unhurriedly, everybody worked double tides for the credit of their country; and as the hospital could buy whatever supplies it liked and was not tied down to routine issue of rations, etc. the Tommies passed the word back up the line that if there was a home from home in France it was at the Australian hospital. We used to meet them at the railway station with the ambulances and drive them over those infernal cobbled roads, bumping and jolting their wounds and shattered bones; but there was never a whine out of the Tommies. If we apologized for the roughness of the trip they said:

“It doesn’t matter, sir, so long as you get us there.”

Lady Dudley at last had come into her own, for her hospital was the busiest and most important private hospital on the Boulogne front. Followed by an orderly with a bucket of hot water, she walked the wards like a duchess, and insisted on washing the faces of the dirtiest men until this provoked a standup fight with the matron who said:

“These men are at the last stage of exhaustion; they mustn’t be touched until I say so.”

After all, this was a trifle. Lady Dudley had originated the hospital, and had got it over to France. Very few women—or men either—could have done that. Nor did she bear any malice towards Colonel Eames, for she sent him a telegram at Christmas:

“God bless and keep you.”

A wonderful woman. She should have been a general, for no doubts assailed her and no difficulties appalled her.

Chapter 14

Captain Towse, V.C.

Blind, but must do his bit—A soldier worth his salt—
Wrote letters for the Tommies—And helped their relatives
—His views on politicians—“Let the soldiers do their
job”—Fads of great generals—The tragedy of the army
pants.

An unexpected arrival at our hospital was Captain Towse, V.C., who came over unheralded but turned out to be one of those men who knit things together instead of tearing them apart. In a regiment, a ship, or a shearing-shed, there is often one man, unobtrusive perhaps, who exerts the same sort of influence that lubricating oil exerts in a motor-car. If Captain Towse had not lost his sight through a rifle-bullet in the Boer War he might have been one of the outstanding figures of the Great War.

Boxing Day, 1914.—This hospital has its troubles other than aristocratic interference. One recalls Swinburne’s lines:

Here come all loves that wither,
Old loves with weary wings,
And all dead days drift hither,
And all disastrous things.

All the millions in London who want to get to France somehow or other seem to concentrate on this show. They have no chance in life of getting over to any military outfit, but this being a quasicivilian concern is fair game. Members of parliament in London pull strings to get over here and tell us how the war should be run.

A parson with no job but any amount of influence got himself sent over somehow, and as the hospital was full he had to be put to sleep in a little cubby-house on the top of the hotel. A terrific storm came in the night and blew down a brick wall on the parson's bed, crushing it flat to the floor. There was a great rush to dig out the corpse; but the parson was not there—had not occupied his bed that night. This drew from the matron the acrid comment:

“I wish I knew whose bed he *was* in.”

But some of these supernumeraries pulled their weight, and a bit over. One afternoon a car pulled up at the door and out of it stepped a blind man, Captain Towse, V.C., a great soldier and a cheery soul in spite of his blindness. A bullet had passed through his head behind his eyes in the South African war and had destroyed his sight, while leaving him otherwise uninjured and unmarked. A man of commanding appearance, his Highland uniform gave a tone to our mess and his mere presence at the hospital was an asset. It was like having a duke as a guest. He had taught himself a Braille shorthand and he had come over to write letters for the wounded men. Before long he was an institution. Not only did he write their letters, but if some unfortunate private's sister was going to be turned out of her cottage in England, Towse would write over to someone who would look into the affair and get them some help. In a few days he could find his way about the place unaided. He was a friend of every private in the hospital.

New Year's Eve.—After dinner the sergeant-major and six sergeants came over to wish the Colonel a happy new year. The sergeant-major, a grand old fellow, about sixty years of age and a grandfather, was full of *joie de vivre* and other stimulants. He nearly wept on seeing Captain Towse whom he claimed as an old friend. And he proposed Towse's health which rather scandalized Towse—it is not done in the regulars. However, he discarded conventions and replied to the toast of his health; and the sergeant-major made another long speech apropos of things in general, and was then seen off by an enthusiastic party. A fine type of British non-com., he is the backbone of the hospital. They can stand his "going large" a trifle at New Year time. I saw Captain Towse back to his quarters at 1 a.m. and explained to him that being Australians we were a bit unconventional.

"My dear chap," he said, "the whole show is unique, but they get things done, by gad they get things done. Your nurses are wonderful women. Taking letters from the men, I listen to the nurses at work, and I hear some queer things. All nurses swear when they are going at high pressure, but a couple of your nurses are artists. They work for that great surgeon MacCormick, and the faster they are going the more they swear. I don't believe MacCormick has any sense of humour whatever, but it seems to please him in some way to listen to these girls—the same sort of pleasure that a small boy gets from listening to a parrot cursing."

I said that I believed those two nurses were the two best nurses in the hospital, so perhaps they were entitled to swear a bit more than the others.

"That might be it," he said. "That might be it. But what I was going to tell you was this. There's a young doctor just come over from England, seems to be a very self-important sort of chap, and the other night he wanted to interfere with one of MacCormick's

patients, a very serious case. These two girls turned on him and gave him a cursing that would have taken away the breath of a drill sergeant. He has reported them to Eames, and I am anxious to see how the thing turns out. I suppose Eames must stick to his doctor; but I expect he will get out of it somehow.”

Eames acted up to his expectations. When the young English doctor came in, very full of his grievance, Eames listened for a while and then he adopted quite a horrified tone.

“But my dear fellow,” he said, “those are MacCormick’s two nurses! All MacCormick’s nurses swear. Like the Hurlingham Polo Club. A Hurlingham team is always expected to swear and the ladies are very disappointed if they don’t hear any of it. Neil Haig swore in front of the Queen once. You know Neil stutters badly. When the secretary wheeled him up for swearing in front of the royal box, Neil said that he started to swear at the far end of the ground, but he didn’t get the oath out until he was opposite the Queen. Nobody objects to MacCormick’s nurses swearing: they always do it.”

Realizing that he had nearly made a social *faux pas* the young doctor withdrew his complaint and the hospital staggered along without any court-martial or investigation.

New Year’s Day, 1915.—A wandering English member of parliament and his wife blew in to lunch and room was made for them at the table. Having worked it to get over to France for the day the lady was very military and wore ammunition boots and puttees over her stockings—or it may be instead of stockings—and when she got back she would doubtless make the other women sick with envy at her tales of “What I saw in France.” She might even write a book about it. As Captain Towse was our star boarder, he was seated next to her at table; but he

happened to be late and when he came in he had not the faintest idea of the identity of his neighbour. For some reason or other he started to talk about the interference by politicians in military affairs, a standing topic with every soldier. We all sat and listened with horror. He had a very fine voice, and though everybody tried to drown him out with talk, clear and strong over the tumult came:

“There is no honour in politics, no morality, nothing but hunting for votes. Any politician coming near an army ought to be sent away at once.”

We tried to get his orderly to give him a hint, but the orderly was too paralysed with terror to attempt any such thing. When things were explained to him afterwards he was utterly unregenerate.

“I’m sorry I talked like that to a lady,” he said. “But better talk to her than not talk at all. The politicians left England without an army and now that we’re getting an army together the least they can do is to keep their hands off it.” Had Captain Towse known the early history of the hospital he might have had even more to say about outside interference in military matters. When the hospital first landed in France they were met by a harassed landing officer who said: “Who the *devil* are you? How did you get here?”

When they told him with great pride that they were an Australian voluntary hospital he waxed eloquent:

“An Australian voluntary hospital,” he said, “and I can’t get the fighting men away to the front! I haven’t got enough room for ammunition and supplies! And they dump an Australian voluntary hospital on to me! You can go straight back in this ship, unless there’s one leaving earlier.”

Then they produced the scrap of paper which Lady Dudley had extracted from some bath-chair general

and waved it at him. Such is the influence of anything in writing in the army that he threw up his hands.

“I never heard of that general,” he said. “He must have been before my time. But now you’re here you can stop, as long as you get away out of this and never come near me again. Clear out of this. And if you get shot as spies I’ll have to deny myself the pleasure of going to your funerals. I’m too busy to look after voluntary hospitals.”

The hospital found temporary quarters in a big stable. Their position was suggestive of the comic song: “Don’t go down in the mine daddy, let the mine come up to you.” They had no idea of moving up to the front but the front moved back to them. The Germans made a push that brought their guns within sound of the hospital, and every time a gun went off the nurses squealed with alarm. Colonel Eames had stayed in England buying supplies, and the civilian doctor in charge was greatly worried as to whether the Germans would respect his scrap of paper. Luckily they had not unpacked, so they managed to commandeer some lorries and after many adventures found themselves at Wimereux. By the time Towse joined them they were established there.

January 2nd.—An inspection is fixed for to-day by the general officer commanding the district. Captain Towse, who is desperately anxious to see the hospital do well, gives some valuable advice:

“Every general,” he said, “has a fad of some sort. You want to find out what his fad is and get ready for it.”

He said that his regiment was once inspected by a general whose fad it was that the officers should know all their men by name. Towse knew all about this weakness for nomenclature; indeed, all general’s

fads are known throughout the army. When he paraded his company he said to them:

“Now, I know you all, and you all know me, but I never can think of names, so you must answer to any name I give you.”

The General walked down the line, firing questions at intervals like minute guns.

“What’s that man’s name?”

“Robertson.”

“What’s this man’s name?”

“Macgregor.”

“What’s that man’s name?”

“Thompson.”

All these were shots in the dark. There wasn’t one name right. Suddenly the General halted and called out: “Private Robertson advance one pace,” and to Towse’s horror a man whose name he happened to know was Ross, stepped forward. Towse had forgotten that he had rechristened him, but the man had remembered and all was well.

The inspection went off with great éclat. Then came an issue of clothing. Here again Captain Towse’s experience was useful for he said:

“You’ll have to look after the tunics but army pants will fit anybody.”

He was right, too. MacDonnell who is five feet five high and four feet round, got a pair of ridingbreeches that seemed to fit him all right, except that they were a bit tight round the waist. He handed them over to Patterson who is six feet high and thirty inches round the waist, and they fitted

him all right except that they were a bit slack in the seat. When Patterson protested, the sergeant-major said:

“Well, sir, them baggy sort is the most popular at ‘Urlin’am.”

Then a private took a look over his shoulder, and said:

“My pants look like I had a loaf o’ bread in the seat of my trousers.”

The sergeant-major riposted with:

“Ah, you’re the sort of bloke that reads *Titbits*, you are. Send ’em to your tailor in Savile Row and he’ll soon take the loaf o’ bread out of ’em.”

Captain Towse later on moved away and ultimately returned to his duties at Buckingham Palace where he was equerry to the Queen and no end of a swell. His work at the hospital had brightened up the lives of a lot of men, and had extended help to a lot of others who badly needed it. Let us hope that he had as kindly recollections of the hospital as the hospital had of him.

My hopes of doing anything as a correspondent vanished into thin air. So I took ship back to Australia, where I was given a commission in that weird branch of the army, the Remount service.

Chapter 15

“Hell-Fire Jack”

A man who feared nothing—“He’s gone after two Turks”—
Had to try a sniff of gas—Remounts and rough-riders—A
general chooses a charger—But selects an Australian
buckjumper—Australian admiration for South African.

It is usual on the stage to begin by introducing some minor characters with a view to providing an effective entrance for the star. These minor characters are supposed to stand about in sycophantic attitudes, or to wave their hats with enthusiasm, as the star approaches; and then the audience starts to cheer. It is perhaps as well, therefore, before introducing Lord Allenby, to prepare for his entrance by saying something about "Hell-fire Jack," otherwise General Royston, by instinct a bandit chief and by temperament a hero, whose name is well known in South Africa, England, and Australia.

But even a Brigadier-General, unimportant as he may be in comparison with a Field-Marshal, is entitled to have some sort of an entrance worked up for him. Let us begin, then, by setting the scene and saying something about the lesser lights (known on the films as "atmosphere") so that we may get the principals into due perspective.

From a military point of view a remount unit is very much "atmosphere." So it is opportune to introduce the sixth squadron of the Second Australian Remount Unit, better known as "Methusaliers," the "Horsehold Cavalry," and the "Horse-dung Hussars." Their activities may serve as a foil for those of General Royston. In its un-military appearance and in its efficiency it rivalled the Australian hospital.

At Sea – En route for Egypt.

"W'ere the 'ell wos it we wos?"

Two of the troopers of the sixth squadron of our Australian remount unit had been wandering about the transport, down an alley-way and up a flight of stairs, down another alley-way and up another flight of stairs, until they were hopelessly lost. One was a little jockey enlisted as a rough-rider, and wearing a

suit of uniform that fitted him all over and touched him nowhere. The other was an over-age man enlisted as a groom and bearing himself with all the smartness and dignity of a tired shearer.

For truth to tell, our remount unit in appearance, at any rate was about Australia's last hope.

The country had been combed for efficient fighting men to make up the losses on Gallipoli and the Western front. Then it was discovered that about a quarter of the Light Horse regiments who were fighting on Gallipoli had been left behind in Egypt to look after the horses; and it was decided to organize a couple of hundred rough-riders, possibly the best lot of men that ever were got together to deal with rough horses. Horse-breakers from the back-blocks; steeplechase riders; men who had got their living by riding outlaw horses in shows—a lot of them had hung back from enlisting for fear that they would never be able to learn the drill. But when they heard that they only had to ride buck-jumpers they decided “to give the war a fly.”

All our officers were over age or unable to pass the doctor for fighting units. Not more than two or three of us knew anything about drill; the rest did not even know a sergeant-major from any other major.

November 1915—At Sea. En route for Egypt. Once we are at sea the march of the inextinguishables commences. These men may be old, but they don't know it. A harassed little Irish non-com. comes up, salutes smartly and says:

“Trooper Whittin'ham wishes to see ye sor.”

Trooper Whittingham, a grizzled veteran from the cattle country with the marks of the scurvy still on the backs of his hands, gives a salute like a man brushing away a fly, and leans his elbows on the table.

Non-com.: “Shun! Stand at attention!”

Straightening up with the weary air of a man playing a child's game in which he is not interested, Trooper Whittingham starts off in the unhurried style of a man who has a long day's riding before him and must make his conversation go as far as possible.

“I was jest thinkin' major,” he says, “that when we git over there I'd like to exchange into one of them fightin' regiments. I was thinkin' I'd like to go into the flyin' corps. I never been up in an airyplane but if a man can sit a horse I suppose he could sit one of them things. I see they gets lost sometimes, and I'll swear I'd never get lost. I can stick a knife into a tree in a scrub and let 'em lead me about blindfold for ten minutes, and when they take the blindfold off I can go straight back to that tree. Gimme one look at a mob o' cattle and I'll tell yer within ten head what there is in 'em so I reckon I could count a mob of Turks even if I was goin' over 'em at a hundred miles an hour.”

I say: “They only take young men in the flying corps. You want nerves like a goat to go flying. I suppose you want to go as an observer. What would happen to you if the pilot got killed.”

“Cripes, yes, it'd be pretty tough if he got killed and I was left up there and couldn't come down. I reckon I'd better go for the artillery.”

Enter another of the ageless men, a prospector this time, his hands all calloused from the pick and the drill.

“I suppose, major,” he says, “that a man could get off now and again to do a bit of prospectin'?”

“Prospecting! What do you want to prospect for? There's no gold in Egypt.”

“No. But them tombs of the Pharoahs, they’re full of golden images and the like of that. If a man could strike one or two of them tombs! I’d get them Egyptians to show me a likely place, and I’d put down a shaft.”

“Put down a shaft. They’re buried under millions of tons of loose sand. You couldn’t put down a shaft.”

“Couldn’t I timber it?”

“No. There’s no timber in Egypt, except the government plantations. If you got cutting down trees there you’d get six months.”

“Well perhaps I could turn a crick (creek) on to it and wash the stuff away. Me an’ my mate we got good gold down near Tumut washin’ twenty feet of alluvial off the top of the pay dirt. What about that?”

“There isn’t a creek in Egypt that’d wash the dirt off a flea. There’s a war on, and you’ve got to look after horses. When it’s over, you can go after the Pharoahs if you like.”

The work of the Remount Depot is to take over the rough uncivilized horses that are bought all over the world by the army buyers; to quieten them and condition them and get them accustomed to being heel-roped; and finally to issue them in such a state of efficiency that a heavily-accoutred trooper can get on and off them under fire if need be.

We had fifty thousand horses and about ten thousand mules through the depot, in lots of a couple of thousand at a time. All these horses and mules had to be fed three times and watered twice every day; groomed thoroughly; the manure carted away and burnt, and each animal had to be exercised every day including Sundays and holidays. His Majesty’s Methusaliers had a perpetual motion job.

Hardly had we got our first shipment of Australian horses—very wild characters some of them— than brigadier-generals began to drop in. Every one of them wanted horses, and each general wanted the best horse; any other general could go and eat coke so far as he was concerned, for every man has to fight for his own hand in the army. Highly placed staff-officers looked in to pass their latest remarks on the war and incidentally to grab a good horse or two for themselves, their friends, or their subordinates. But Allenby's orders were very strict. No officer, not even a staff popinjay or a brigadier, should be allowed to select a horse for himself. We had to issue the horses. The best had to go to the fighting men; the next best to the staff; and the culls and rejects to the men on lines of communication, camp-commandants, doctors, water-supply officers, and such-like cattle.

Among the first brigadier-generals who made for our depot, as Chinese junks make for port at the first smell of a typhoon, was General Royston who had made a name for himself in South Africa as Commander of Royston's Horse. He was a square-built energetic man always doing something, a sort of prototype of "Teddy" Roosevelt when the latter was the colonel of the rough-riders.

It is said that there were sixty generals at one time quartered in Shepherd's Hotel. But Royston was not the Shepherd's Hotel brand of general—far from it. He had been given command of a brigade of Australian light horse. While it is altogether an admirable thing for a general to set his troops a good example by showing a contempt for danger, it must be admitted that Royston rather overdid it; and his troops alternately admired him and cursed him. It was not that he wanted to show off—he was not that sort of man—but when he got anywhere near a fight, a sort of exaltation seemed to seize him, and he took no more account of bullets than of so many house flies.

“When I’m running a show, Paterson,” he said to me. “I stick my lance in the ground; leave Dangar (his brigade major) in charge, and I go off to see how the boys are getting on.”

He would ride up behind a row of dismounted men firing for their lives and exhort them:

“That’s it boys. Pump it into ’em!” This to the accompaniment of a sotto-voce chorus from the firing line:

“Get out of that you old b—d. You’re drawing the fire on us!” The General Officer Commanding once rode up in a terrific hurry, all sweat and lather to make some alteration in the positions, shouting as he came:

“Where’s General Royston? Where’s General Royston?” An army signaller, who was eating his dinner out of a tin of bully-beef in the shade of his horse, stopped chewing for a moment and pointed to the Turkish lines:

“I last seen him (bite) gallopin’ up that gully (chew) after two Turks (swallow).”

Small wonder then that this thruster was about our first caller when the new lot of Australian horses came in. He rode up all unannounced and said that as he was passing by he had just dropped in to pick out a few horses for his brigade. When he was told that this was forbidden, he said:

“Well at any rate I’ll pick out a horse for myself. You must do the best you can to keep him for me.”

Running his eye over the compound where the horses were walking about stretching their legs, he picked out a magnificent black horse, one of the best-looking officers’ chargers that ever came out of Australia:

“My horses get a lot of work,” he said (which was true beyond any doubt) “and that fellow will just suit me.”

Then came the day when we started on the first mob of horses. General Royston must have had some kind of second sight for he turned up that morning to see the performance:

“There’s no harm in my *looking* at ’em,” he said. “I’m always up early (it was just on four o’clock in the morning) so I thought I’d ride round to have a look at ’em. Are you going to allot them their horses?”

“No,” I said. “I’ll let Sergeant-major Dempsey do that. He got his living riding buckjumpers in shows in Australia, and he can tell an outlaw through a galvanized-iron fence. A lot of these are old Queensland horses that have been ridden once and then turned out for two or three years.”

“Do you think they’ll buck at all?”

“Well, they’ll surprise me greatly if they don’t. I knew one big supplier in Australia who had shipped all his broken-in horses—about six hundred—and he got a rush order for a hundred more to fill up another ship. He hadn’t a broken-in horse nearer than five hundred miles, so he ran in a hundred unbroken horses and put the Barcoo polish on ’em.”

“Put the what, on ’em? The Barcoo polish. Some drug or other?”

“No. He and his boy ran them into a yard and forced them through a race, one after another, and the two, between them, caught and rode a hundred unbroken horses in two days. That’s a Barcoo polish. They could swear that every horse had been ridden. These men here would rather have one of those horses that knows nothing, than one of these old outlaws that

has been ridden till he got a sore back and was then turned out for a couple of years.”

The depot was on the edge of the desert with the waters of the Nile in the background, and beyond the river the pyramids stood clear against the skyline. The General jerked his thumb towards the pyramids”

“From their summits forty centuries look down on us, but I don’t think the pyramids ever saw anything like this. What an outfit!”

The rough-riders had come out carrying their saddles and dressed for action. Field service uniform for a rough-rider consists of a shirt and riding-breeches; no leggings or puttees, and their socks were pulled up outside the ends of their breeches. They wore elastic-sided boots specially made in Australia, with smooth tops so that there would be nothing to catch a rider’s foot in the stirrup. Their saddles, also specially made, had high pommels and cantles with big knee and thigh-pads. Dust rose in clouds from the quiet horses going out to exercise; and as for the flies—there are five elements in Egypt: earth, air, flies, fire, and water, in the order of seniority.

Sergeant-major Dempsey, a six-foot-two Australian, straight as a stringy-bark sapling and equally as tough, took charge of the rough-riding. He had not yet acquired the military method of command. He said:

“Now, you, Bill, get hold of that bay horse,” instead of barking out his orders as a sergeant-major should. Men do not get on rough horses by word of command, they get on when they can.

“Charley, you take that big chestnut fellow. George, you take that black horse with the Battle Abbey brand. We’ll rub some stickfast on your saddle, for

they'll all buck. I was breakin' in there once, and I never struck such a lot of snakes in me life."

Having allotted the worst-looking horses to the best riders the sergeant-major says, "Now boys, grab your horses. Get to 'em." There is a charming lack of formality about the proceedings. One rider begins to croon a song:

'Tis of a brave old squatter, boys, his name was William
Binn.
He had two gallant sons was known both near and far,
He had some outlaw horses and none could break them
in,
So I went down, rough-riding, on old Bulginbar.

"Tiger" Richards, a strapping young horse-breaker from the Riverina, says:

"This is my lucky day: look what I've got." And he drags out a sleepy old bay horse that looks more like a ration-carrier's hack than an outlaw. But Dempsey is seldom wrong. As soon as the old horse sees the saddle he tries to pull away and drags Tiger and the saddle all over the compound.

"Come on, you silly Queensland cow," says the Tiger. "Do you think I'm an alligator?"

"Watch him, Tiger," says Dempsey. "That cove threw Billy Waite (a celebrated rider) in our show in Queensland."

"He's struck something better than Billy Waite this time then. Hit him over the rump so as I can get him in the corner and have a few words with him."

In a moment the compound was full of trouble. Horses were bucking all over the place. A big chestnut horse, as soon as he was mounted, threw himself straight over backwards and narrowly missed pinning his rider to the ground.

A waspish little bay mare refused to move at all when mounted, and crouched right down till her chest nearly touched the ground. It appeared that she was going to roll over, and her rider kicked his feet out of the stirrups. As he did so, she unleashed a terrible spring that shot him out of the saddle and sent him soaring in the air, high enough to see over the pyramids—or at any rate so he said. Some unmouthed brutes bolted back into the compound and fell over the ropes, while others set sail out into the desert as though they were going back to Australia.

Tiger Richards having mounted his horse said:

“He’s mine.” But the next moment he passed us at full gallop, the old horse boring his head down with no more mouth than the Bull of Bashan. “I’m his,” he added as the bolter tore away towards the Nile, where he fell head over heels into an Egyptian grave that had sunk below the level of the surrounding desert. As Richards got up and spat the sand out of his mouth he said:

“That’s the cove to win the war. A million b—y Turks wouldn’t stop him.”

General Royston watched all this without saying anything. But at last he burst out:

“Where’s my black horse, the one I picked for myself?”

“I’ve kept him for the last, sir,” said Dempsey. “I think he’ll show us some style. Bob Adams is going to ride him. He’s an old rider but good. How are you feeling on it, Bob? Would you like me to put one of the boys on him?”

“Not on your life, Jack. I’m just as likely to get hurt off a quiet old cuddy that’d fall down and break my

neck. It's all in the game. If this cove throws me, the saddle and the hide'll come too."

They were not shrinking violets, those rough-riders—not so that you would notice it.

The General's choice was led out and gave little trouble while being handled.

"There you are," said the General. "What did I tell you. Quiet as a lamb. Best horse I've seen in Egypt. Best horse I've ever seen anywhere. You *must* keep him for me."

They lunged the black horse round for a bit, but he refused to take anything out of himself. Then Adams mounted. Whoof! Away he went arching himself almost into a circle like a watch-spring with his head right in under his girths. Straight ahead, sideways, round and round, backwards, he went in great bounds roaring with rage all the time and shaking and wrenching his rider at every prop and every spring. He wound up by landing, rider and all in an irrigation canal with a splash like the launching of a battleship. Adams could hardly walk when he got off him.

"There you are, sir," said Dempsey. "He'll never make a general's charger. Best thing we can do with him is to sell him to the Turks. He's an old hand at the game, that fellow; no matter how quiet you get him you couldn't trust him the length of a whip. He'd be always watching you, and when he got his chance he'd set into it and he'd throw any man in the world out of one of those patent self-emptiers—those slippery army saddles."

But Royston, like Teddy Roosevelt, did not know the meaning of the words "inferiority complex."

"I can ride him," he said. "I can ride anything. I'll be very hurt, Paterson, if you don't keep him for me."

It seemed a good chance to say that he would be very hurt if we *did* keep him for him; but one doesn't say these things to a general and off he went followed by admiring comments from the rough-riders:

“That's Hell-fire Jack. He'd ha' been shot fifty times, only he won't keep still long enough for the Turks to hit him.”

We kept the black horse in the depot to give buck-jumping exhibitions which were very popular among the visiting English aristocracy, and created a good impression that we were doing our job. One titled lady asked:

“Do you ride many of the outlaws, Major Paterson?”

“Only those that the men can't ride.”

Modesty gets no one anywhere in the army.

The gallant General's inability to keep out of a fight might have landed him in the equivalent of Stellenbosch, or might have earned him the command of a light horse division. On one occasion he arrived at a fight in the desert (I think it was Romani) and found our forces enclosing the Turks on three sides, and apparently awaiting orders to attack. Riding up to one regiment that was waiting the return of its colonel from a conference, Royston called out: “Come on, boys.” The regiment, with howls of exultation, at once followed him. The other regiments, seeing these go in, thought that orders had arrived for an attack, and in half a minute they were all over the Turks. The victory went down to the credit of the man in charge of operations. But Royston had, at any rate, hurried things up. He was in line for a high command when his optimism proved his downfall.

Poison gas had been used by the Germans and experiments were being made with it on the

Palestine front. Nothing would do Royston but that he must have a sniff of it. He was one of those men who would try anything once. He was warned against it, but no, he must have just one sniff of it so that he might be able to recognize it if it should ever be used against his troops. The result was that I found him in a hospital, a badly shaken man, passing green urine, and ordered away for long leave. But nothing would daunt him and he spoke most cheerfully of the day he would come back.

So far as I know he never got back. Thus one of the most picturesque personalities in the British army dropped out of active service.

Chapter 16

Lord Allenby

Known as “The Bull”—Physique of a policeman—Cavalryman that took risks—Reforming a rabble—Making the staff step on it—Loneliness of a great commander—Attention to details wins battles.

Before saying anything about Allenby’s part in the Great War, let us go back to his first introduction to Australians. It may serve to “place” the man, as it were, and to explain his methods when, later on, he had charge of the Palestine operations.

A squadron of New South Wales Lancers, part of the army of Lord Roberts, were camped outside Bloemfontein with the rest of French’s cavalry, waiting for the army to move. Cavalry are the curled darlings of the army. But for once in a way their luck was out, and they had been allotted camp within measurable and smellable distance of ground that had been used as a graveyard for mules. Every day the ambulances came out and took away enteric cases. Day after day the rain poured down till the horses stood shivering, hunched up on their lines, and the men huddled in their tents, grumbling

incessantly. They stopped their grumbling only to raise a derisive cheer when the O.C. of their next-door squadron, the Australian Horse, had a dinner-bell rung for his mess at meal-times. Somehow, a dinner-bell seemed to be the last straw.

“Don’t those cows over there carry watches,” said one trooper. “Fancy ringin’ a dinner-bell! A man’d think they were runnin’ a bloody restaurant.”

The officers’ mess of the Lancers boasted no dinner-bell but every mess orderly was a carefully selected tee-totaller: and when in the depths of the depression a rum issue was announced, the officers drew their servants’ rum in addition to their own and settled down to make a night of it. They needed cheering up, too, for things were going badly with them. Their major had gone sick, discipline was slack, and an English officer—a young major named Allenby—had been given command of the squadron. The word was passed from one to another. Had anybody seen this Allenby? What was he like? Was it true that he had a prince with him as lieutenant? How do you speak to a prince when he wanted to camp his men on the best ground and to crowd you into a creek? Was it true that they were bringing a troop of Inniskillings to reinforce the Lancer squadron? Would the Inniskillings be decent chaps or would they be just a mass of flashness?

Midnight in the camp. The only sounds were the occasional rattle of a head collar from the horse-lines; the squelch, squelch of the picket’s feet as he foot-slogged backwards and forwards through the mud, and from the officers’ tent a sound of harsh male voices all singing different songs and singing them at the same time. Rum flowed like water. During a lull in the singing a voice made itself clear in the silence.

“The nex’ war,” it said, “I’ll march down to the wharf with the troops and I’ll sing ‘Sons of the Sea’ and

‘The Boys of the Old Brigade’ and then I’ll turn round and (hic) march right straight home again. Gosh, ain’t them mules high to-night! Anyhow, let’s drink the health of this Allenby. He mightn’t be such it bad sort.”

The cheering that followed the toast had hardly died away when a precise clear-cut English voice was heard from the darkness outside the tent.

“Is Captain C—there?” it asked. “Is Captain C—there?”

It was Allenby. He had just arrived.

The revellers were appalled. Visions of being sent home—which, after all, was the last thing that they wanted—struck cold chills down their spines. Those that were able to move under their own power slid out through the back door of the tent.

Somebody had to do something, and to do it quickly. The occasion always produces the man. And as I was a civilian and had met Major Allenby I appointed myself the Curtius who was to jump into the gulf. As I stepped out of the tent a trembling sentry held a lantern to my face and the great man recognized me.

“Oh, it’s you Paterson. What’s all this about?”

Not being able to think of anything better to say, I smiled a sickly smile and said:

“We were just drinking your health, sir. We hope you didn’t mind.”

“I heard you. But that’s no excuse for keeping the whole camp awake. You tell them to be in bed with all lights out, in five minutes, or I’ll have to do something about it.” Then he turned on his heel and the darkness swallowed him up.

All was quiet on the Bloemfontein front.

Daylight revealed him as a sinewy well-set-up man, at least six feet high, and broad and strong as a London policeman. In facial contour he bore a distinct resemblance to Kitchener, but he smiled often and his expression was free from the secret sorrow that always seemed to harry Kitchener's soul. He set about the reorganization of the squadron with the enthusiasm of a scientist experimenting with a new sort of beetle. He neither bounced nor bullied anybody but explained things as carefully as a school-teacher dealing with a lot of children. He got hold of the blacksmiths, and told them that he would give them a certain time to get all the horses properly shod and that then he would come round to see that they had done it. He stirred up the cooks, and if he found any dirty utensils on an inspection, the man responsible was "for it." He made the young officers take a pride in their troops; if a man was slovenly dressed, or a horse not properly cleaned, trouble always followed.

Soldiering is a trade and Allenby had learnt it. The work was just a routine to him, and he betrayed no more worry or irritability than a mechanic repairing a motor car. Of course the men growled at his strictness just as MacLaurin's men growled at his insistence on saluting the troopships; but before long the new major began to get things into shape. He had the camp moved away from the mule cemetery; and owing to his position in the army as officer of a crack cavalry regiment the squadron were able to get rather more than their share of whatever extra issues were going, such as tinned fruit, tobacco, cigarettes, socks, or rum. The men began to carry themselves with a swagger, for were they not under command of an Inniskilling officer.

And then there was the Prince of Teck!

"I used to go down town," said one man, "and if I wanted to have a drink I had to drink with the flies.

Now I start to talk about our new officer, the Prince of Teck, and everybody wants to shout for me.”

The next thing was that one morning a lot of the men appeared with the letters A.O.V. written large with indelible pencil on the front of their hats. These letters, they explained, stood for “Allenby’s Own Volunteers.” Allenby had them into the orderly room and fined each man for wilfully damaging a hat the property of Her Majesty.

“If they’re going to start writing criticisms of their officers on their hats,” he said, “they’ll be running a popularity competition—all blanks and no prizes—before we know where we are.”

Alexander of Teck though he was a royalty was also a keen professional soldier, and had learnt the routine of his job. He ran his hand up the horses’ backs to see if they were cleaned, ate the men’s food at meal-time inspection, and took his turn out on patrol like everybody else. He thoroughly enjoyed the sensation of being able to use any language he chose and to conduct himself like a human being—instead of having to weigh every word and study every gesture. A fine upstanding young fellow he could have gone on to the stage in the chorus of a comic opera and knocked the gallery girls for a row of tin-cans.

This same Lieutenant Teck afterwards visited Australia and had a reunion with some of his old comrades of the Lancer squadron. But in Australia he was on parade all the time—the royalty who had to say how nice everything was and how charming were the place and the people. Everything he said would be repeated; everything he did would be chronicled in the Press. He must have sighed for the old service days when he could let himself go a bit.

All this is by way of leading up to Allenby’s development into a Field-Marshal in the Great War. No doubt the thoroughness that he displayed in

reorganizing a volunteer squadron of Lancers was the foundation of his thoroughness in organizing his attack on the Turks. But before moving on to Allenby *in excelsis*, the dictum of a colonel of infantry on military leadership is worth consideration.

“These cavalry chaps,” he said, “they have mostly got money and all of them have influence. If they make a mistake they get another job, so they can afford to take risks. But a P.B.I (poor b— infantry) general has seldom any money; and if he makes a mistake there are scores of men waiting to jump on him and to get his job. That’s why a cavalryman makes the best general for the big jobs. He’ll have a go at anything while an infantryman has to play safe all the time. You watch this Allenby. He’s only a major now and I’m a colonel, but if the cards run his way he’ll be a Field-Marshal when I’m retired and trying to scrape up enough money to pay my insurance premiums. I’m too poor to take risks. If a cavalryman falls overboard they throw him a life-belt, but if one of us falls overboard they throw him a grindstone.”

And now, having introduced Allenby, let us get on to the big show in Palestine.

Cairo, Egypt 1917—Once again I find myself sitting in a tent in the desert waiting for Allenby to reorganize things. It recalls the old days in South Africa where he had to reorganize a Lancer squadron. Now he has to reorganize an army.

It is strange to look back on those South African days with French handling a small cavalry command in an obscure side street of the war; Haig plodding conscientiously through the duties of brigade major; Allenby knocking a rough Australian squadron into shape and wondering when, if ever he would get the command of his regiment. Had any of them any idea that he would one day carry a Field-Marshal’s baton?

Plenty of reorganization was needed on the Palestine front, as will be seen by the following few incidents. Things were at a standstill and an army never stands still. It either goes forward or backward. Generals out of a job to the number of ninety or so had accumulated in Shepheard's Hotel where they either just existed beautifully or they made themselves busy about such jobs as reporting upon the waste of jam tins. Others became town commandants, or examiners of an army diet. So many were they that there was little room for junior officers in the hotel and no room at all for noncoms or the rank and file. These latter riff-raff were forbidden to enter the hotel, even to buy a drink or to meet a friend, lest they should come between the wind and the nobility of the staff officers. This created a very unpleasant feeling and the troops rioted outside Shepheard's by way of voicing their protest. The trouble came at dinner-time in the evening. A hurried call was sent in, that all officers should leave the dining-room and go out and help by their prestige to quell the riot.

Two Australian officers had just bought a motor-car for their private use and were having a good dinner with a view to, later on driving their new acquisition out to the pyramids with some female youth and beauty on board. Belonging to a non-combatant unit, they easily persuaded themselves that they were not called upon to go out and quell riots; so they sat tight and wound up a satisfactory dinner with some excellent cognac. Then, the riot having subsided, they went out and found that out of three hundred motor-cars the troops had burnt just *one*—and that was their new car!

Some general or other must have been put on as O.C. of dress and deportment, for one day a full-page order came out that officers were on no account to wear socks that did not match the rest of their clothing. Hardly had this ukase made its appearance when two officers went into Shepheard's Hotel one evening after dinner and made all present

—generals included—hold up their feet to show their socks. They said that they were commissioned to see that the new order was being observed. Not a man dared keep his foot down, and the jokers got away with it.

G.H.Q. indignantly repudiated them, but no officer dared complain that he had been so pricelessly spoofed.

So great was the number of generals in charge of nothing in particular that the supply of motor-cars (fit for generals) reached its limit and an order was issued that all privately owned motor-cars (fit for generals) should be handed in at once. An Australian officer, Lieutenant O— had brought over a very expensive car for the use of his wife who was staying in Egypt. Some lynx-eyed commandant must have spotted this car. Perhaps it was the cause of the order. At any rate, it was seized by the authorities on the same day that the order came out, and was placed in an army garage.

What to do? O—’s wife was not of the type that turns the other cheek to the smiter and she insisted that her husband must do something and do it quickly. Recourse was had to an English colonel of supply who had graduated with honours in the art of improving on any orders that did not happen to suit him.

“These G.H.Q. people here,” he said, “have as many fads as a centipede has legs. Are you game to go into the garage and take your car?”

Being prepared to do anything rather than face his wife without the car, O— walked boldly into the garage where a mechanic had just finished polishing this very car. At sight of O— he saluted smartly and stood to attention.

“Any petrol in her,” said O—

“Yes,sir. Plenty.”

“Right. Just give her a swing will you.”

He drove the car down to where his English friend was waiting and here a gap had been made in the wall of a great hollow square of horse-feed, a rampart of incredible height and thickness. Making a hole in it was like digging out the Culebra cut; but it was done and the car was popped inside, and the wall was built up again. The whole Palestine force could have marched round and round the rampart, as the Israelites marched round the walls of Jericho, without seeing a sign of the car inside.

“I look on that,” said the supply colonel, “as one of the neatest jobs ever I did.”

The usual “please explains” followed and the officer in charge of O—’s unit was asked to explain what had become of the car and he replied that he would make every effort to ascertain. When a man promises to make every effort, that is invariably the end of the matter; for he can keep on replying that he is making every effort till the correspondence dies of old age. Female diplomacy then took a hand, for O—’s wife who had considerable social eminence offered to provide a car to help Lady MacMahon in her Red Cross work. This was accepted, and the car with Lady MacMahon in it was driven right past Shepheard’s Hotel under the very eyes of the ninety generals until they got so used to the sight as to take no further notice.

Such then was the state of things prior to the advent of Alllenby—troops rioting, officers disregarding orders, and generals wearing wrongly coloured socks. Then came Allenby. And everything was altered in the twinkling of an eye.

It was a changed Allenby who came to take command in Egypt fourteen years after the South

African war. He had been through the shambles of Mons where he had dismounted his cavalry and thrown them into the fighting line in a vain effort to stop the German rush. He had lost his son in the war; and being a full-fleshed man, the heat of Egypt tried him severely, and made him harder than ever. Where he had been granite before he was steel now.

He came to inspect our horse depot—a great lonely figure of a man, riding silently in front of an obviously terrified staff. He seemed quite glad to recognize a friend in me. For a Remount officer is like a Field-Marshal, he has no hope of promotion and no friends whatever in the army. After chatting about the old South African days, he said:

“I am afraid I am becoming very hard to get on with. I want to get this war over and if anything goes wrong I lose my temper and cut loose on them. I haven’t got down to finding fault with the Remount service yet, but it seems to me that your Australian horses are a common hairy-legged lot, compared to the horses that your Lancers brought to South Africa.”

I explained to him that the Lancers’ horses were a specially picked lot of police horses, fully trained, and in superb condition; and that it would be impossible to get enough of such horses to make any practical difference in this war.

Then we came to the cook-house. No matter what an inspecting general’s fads may be, there is one iron rule that he must look in at the cook-house and ask some questions about the men’s food. Our chief cook was an old South African man. When Allenby saw the ribbon he asked about the man’s service, whether he was married and how many children he had. Then came the question as to what sort of food was being issued to the troops. Having been a shearer’s cook, our chef was beyond being rattled,

even by a Field-Marshal, and he answered very glibly:

“They gets stoo, sir, and plum puddin’” he said, “and any amount of tinned fruit. The chow in this war, sir, is Guv’ment ’Ouse compared to what we got in South Africa.” This for the benefit of any potential grumblers within hearing.

“Very good,” said Allenby. “Very good. I’m glad to hear it. Carry on. Now,” he said, hauling out a notebook, “I want to go to the tenth division.”

Then the blow fell.

The tenth division were on their way from India or Mesopotamia and it was not definitely known to the staff whether they had arrived in camp or were some distance away. A staff officer stepped forward with: “If you please, sir—” But Allenby cut him short.

“I don’t want to hear you talk,” he said. “I’ve enough men following me about to staff the whole British Army and you can’t find me a division.”

Another brass-hatted hero stepped into the breach.

“Just at present, sir—”

“I don’t want to hear you talk, either. I want to get on with this inspection. Where’s this division?”

Just as things were at their blackest an orderly came running with a telephone message, giving the location of the missing myrmidons, and the staff cars drove off, followed by the worshipping glances of our cooks who hadn’t missed a word of the engagement.

“That’s the sort of general for me,” said the chief cook. “A bloke that knows his own mind. My word, he did roar up them staff officers a treat. Do ’em good. Take some of the flashness out of ’em.”

Thus was accomplished the second coming of Allenby. The troops did not write “Allenby’s Own Volunteers” on their hats; but by some sort of mass psychology they felt that such capers as running riots, disobeying orders, and burning motor-cars were definitely “off.”

Men who met him were asked by others “What’s this new bloke like?”

“He’s the sort of bloke that when he tells you to do a thing you know you’d better get up and do it. He’s the boss, this cove.”

They christened him “The Bull” straight away.

Chapter 17

Lord Allenby (Continued)

The Great Clean-Up

Preparing for the swoop—Casualties in flying force—Issue of tin hats—How one man makes an army—The Turk as a linotype operator—The Tommies stuff the Turks with food.

Things began to move from the moment that “The Bull” started to push against them. The Shepherd’s Hotel generals were dispersed with scant ceremony. Army headquarters which had been located in Cairo (heavily surrounded by sentries) were moved a hundred and fifty miles or so nearer the enemy.

“We’re a bit too far from our work here,” said the big man. “I’d like to get up closer where I can have a look at the enemy occasionally.”

Then began the weeding-out process. He tried general after general as a man would try hat after hat in a hat shop before he bought one. He tried out his personnel in little expeditions and raids giving

every commander a chance, but only one chance. He was getting his team together. After all, an army commander cannot be bowler and wicket-keeper too; he must leave details to other people. And Allenby's job was to get the right people.

We of the Remounts were moved up to an advanced depot near the front. We had no fear of getting our heads knocked off, for we were not tall poppies; but to our depot there came staff officers galore, discussing in hushed voices the imminent issue of a tin hat to some general whose headgear had been mostly brass. This expression "tin hat" arose from the tin extinguisher that was used in the old days to put out a candle. When Allenby issued a tin hat to a man that man was forthwith extinguished.

Nobody dared to discuss the big man's plans lest a bird of the air should carry the matter; but it was felt that the most important command in the whole show was that of the Mounted division. This division would be the spearhead of the attack; and the chances of the command going to the Australian Chauvel were much discussed, up and down, disputin' and contendin'.

"They'll never give it to Chauvel," said one brass-bound brigadier. "Fancy giving the command of the biggest mounted force in the world's history to an Australian. Chauvel's sound, but he's such a sticky old frog."

Chauvel was given a try-out on a side-show and, if the brass hats were to be believed, he did not cover himself with glory.

"There's an extra big tin hat being got ready," was the only crumb of information that dropped from the staff table, and apparently there was something in it. Another general was given the next try-out but he did so much worse than Chauvel that the order for the tin hat was cancelled. Allenby did not care

whether a man were an Australian or a Kick-a-poo Indian; he wanted to win the war.

So definite was the idea of Chauvel's impending crash that one general—himself an Australian—went up with an orderly to the fight at Beersheba where Chauvel was in command. I happened to go up in the train with this general, who had married into the English aristocracy and thought himself next in order for the cavalry command.

“This chap Chauvel,” he said, “he’s too damn slow. I’ve just come along to see how things turn out.” They turned out all wrong for this general. The New Zealanders whose horses had not had a drink for seventy hours and the Australians who were in much the same fix, rode right over the Turkish trenches at full gallop—against the principles of war you understand—but still it came off. And that, after all, is the great test of any operation—Does it come off?

Chauvel rode into Beersheba where the Turks (or was it the Germans) had left bombs buried in the sand and under the doorsteps, so arranged that any man who put his foot on the doorstep would be blown up. I saw a nigger catch his foot in a bit of wire sticking up out of the ground, and in the next instant the nigger was blown to pieces. Chauvel, belying his reputation of being a sticky old frog had hustled on after the enemy as soon as his horses were watered; and towards the end of the day I came upon his rival, still accompanied by an orderly, walking disconsolately through the empty streets of Beersheba. Marius among the ruins of Carthage was nothing to it.

Allenby tried out his engineers and his flying men in the same way, and never was man better served. Among his engineers was the Canadian Girouard who successfully disguised his great ability under a vacant stare and a single eyeglass. I remembered this Girouard from the South African days when he

was mainly distinguished by his *laissez-faire* attitude and his habit of singing a little song about *Alouette, je te plumerai le bec*, etc. I had to go somewhere in a hurry and the line was blown up. Without much hope I approached this dilettante and asked what chance there was of getting across. Fixing me with his single eyeglass he drawled:

“If you go four miles on your flat feet I’ll carry you the other four hundred.”

On the Palestine front this man and others with him repaired bridges as soon as they were blown up; they kept the water-supply (pumped all the way from Egypt) abreast of the troops on their advance; and they successfully laid a wire-netting road on the desert sand so that the infantry could march along it. I have no doubt that some of the engineers got tin hats, but the others deserved haloes.

April 1916—Everything is being hurried up. The big English flying school near our camp has been ordered to turn out as many pilots as quickly as possible and there is an average of eighteen planes in the air all day long, just over our heads. The din is indescribable, but the horses never look up, or otherwise take the slightest notice of the planes. The life of a pilot, computed in flying hours, is pitifully short; many of them are killed while learning. My wife is working as voluntary aid at a hospital in Ismailia, and she and her associates are constantly making shrouds for these boys that have perhaps made one little mistake in their first solo flight, and have paid for it with their lives. The army will do anything in reason for these youngsters. We are ordered to let them have riding-horses and we occasionally turn out quite a creditable hunt with Saluki hounds after jackals. Part of the training is to fly close to fixed objects. One boy who had the natural gift for flying swooped down on an Egyptian fisherman in the canal and went so close that he hit him with the undercarriage and killed him.

Then the boy lost his head and after landing his plane by the side of the canal he set off to walk blindly across the desert. The flying people had a nice problem on their hands—an abandoned plane by the side of the canal, a fisherman with his head smashed to pieces in a boat, and beyond that, nothing. Sherlock Holmes would have been puzzled.

Later, the boy, hardly knowing what he was doing, walked into a camp some miles up the line and the whole thing was explained. The Royal Air Force had their own system of courts martial: this youngster was sentenced to confinement to a camp where he could go on with his flying. One life doesn't matter much in a war, and the army couldn't afford to lose the services of a pilot with the big move just ahead.

Possibly by way of throwing the enemy off the scent, the Commander-in-Chief arranged for an inspectional tour of the canal camps, just so that no one would think that he had anything important on his mind. He arrived at our camp and rode through the depot inspecting the horses "as affable as be damned" to quote a rough-rider sergeant who had expected the great man to blow fire out of his nostrils. Everyone sat back and wondered when, if ever, the big attack would come off.

Flying school inspection. Some big move is on foot. Allenby is inspecting this flying school where an officer known as the "Mad Major" has killed more pupils and turned out more pilots than anyone has ever done in the world before. Everybody is keyed up. Even the flying Colonel Grant Dalton, who lost a leg in a flying crash, still keeps at it; he flies down to Port Said for fish for the mess just to keep his hand in. One day one of his wheels dropped from the plane as he took off and a pupil with a fast machine went after him holding up a board inscribed "your wheel is off." Grant Dalton pancaked her down in a swamp at Port Said and the pupil, thinking to be a boy scout and do his good deed for the day, went

down alongside him to see if he could be of any help. Result—both planes hopelessly bogged, and a lot of lively language from Grant Dalton towards the pupil. But all these little affairs are only just the chips that are thrown off while Allenby whittles the force into shape.

We are very near the climax now. I am taking a hundred horses up by road as there is not room for them on the trains; and ahead of me and behind me there are similar consignments of horses all headed for the front. I pass a flying depot where the boys are leaving at daylight, each with his load of bombs to smash up the Turks. Eight of them start off, but one boy's machine fails to make altitude and he comes back for adjustments. As he lands, he rushes over to us and says:

“Come on, let us have a drink. I want a drink badly.”

I say that it seems to me a bit early to have a drink.

“When a man has just landed a machine,” he says, “with a dozen perfectly good live bombs under it, believe me, he wants a drink.” So we go and have a drink, and I speculate on what might have happened if he had landed the machine roughly and started those bombs off. These flying boys are being tested, and they are coming through it in great shape.

I arrive at the front with my horses just in time to hand them over and to see the start of the expedition after all Allenby's months of preparation. Brigadier-General George Onslow, who has made quite a name for himself, is in charge of a brigade of Australian light horse. He comes over for a chat before they leave.

“It's all or nothing with us,” he says. “We have to smash right through the Turks and come out on the other side. I think Julius Caesar would have funk'd trying it. If we get held up we'll be out of provisions

and horse-feed in a couple of days, and then you can write to me at Constantinople. But don't worry, we'll get through all right. We're more frightened of Allenby behind us than we are of the Turks in front. We'll go through Palestine looking over our shoulders, and the first thing you'll know we'll be in Damascus."

This is not a history of the war—only a diffident onlooker's view of some of the principal characters. So there is no need to say anything about Allenby's great rush, which has been described in a hundred books already. But when the tumult and the shouting had passed by, I happened to be with a force that gathered up a battalion of demoralized Turks in the Jordan Valley. Up to that time, I had always looked upon a Turk as a paunchy person who lounged under a tree, while his wives fanned him and filled him with sherbet. These Turks, however, were not up to sample. They had been drifting about for days without any supplies and without any communication with their headquarters.

They were poor ragged men with cheap shoddy uniforms and worn-out boots—but they were soldiers. Battalions that had had no food for three days came in in military formation, not a man out of the ranks, and sat silently down to take whatever fate had in store for them. Neither English nor Australian troops had any grudge against the Turks, and the captured "Jackos" were given more food and more cigarettes than they had ever enjoyed during the whole war.

The Turkish colonel in command broke all traditions for he did not say: "It is the will of Allah." He said just exactly nothing, except to refuse food until his troops were fed. Even in his worn and shabby uniform he could have walked into any officer's mess in the world, and they would have stood up to make room for him. Half the world is always anxious to know how the other half live, and I was very anxious

to find out something about these Turks. Selecting one man at random I tried him in English. I said, "What do you do for a living in Turkey?"

In perfect English he replied, "I'm a linotype operator."

A linotype operator! Here was I in the newspaper business myself, and the only Turk that I ever captured was a linotype operator. Evidently, we knew no more about the Turks than we did about the Boers when we first went to South Africa.

Here is just a final glimpse of Allenby before dropping the curtain. After his victory, when his troops were encamped in Palestine, a New Zealand trooper was fatally knifed by an Arab thief who was robbing his tent; and the New Zealanders and their blood brothers, the Highlanders, organized a revenge party. They were sick and tired of being robbed and murdered by an allegedly friendly population, and they knew that nothing would be done unless they did it themselves. A few Australians went along with them—there couldn't be any trouble on any front without an Australian being in it—and the revenge party followed the thief to his village, recovered the stolen goods, and killed every able-bodied man in the village. Then they threw the bodies down a well; filled the well up; burnt the village, and retired in good order to their camp which was within half a mile of Allenby's headquarters. That hot-headed potentate was informed that the Australians had done it. He fell them in and harangued them:

"I was proud to command you," he said. "But now I'll have no more to do with you. You are cowards and murderers."

Did the Australians rise up to a man and protest? Not a bit of it! All they said was:

“The old Bull has got things wrong somehow.” And an Australian mule-driver, when his mules jibbed, got off his wagon, lit a cigarette and said:

“I was proud to command you. But now I’m done with you. You are cowards and murderers.”

Also it may be mentioned that every Australian, down to hospital patients, turned out and wildly cheered Allenby when he made his triumphal return to Cairo after smashing up the Turks in Palestine.

Hospital cases were carried out on stretchers and wounded men limped out on the arms of orderlies to wait by the line till his train went by. As soon as the train was sighted a roar of cheering broke out and was kept up till the train with its solitary figure on the car platform swept out of sight.

One trooper, filling his pipe and looking after the smoke of the departing train, pronounced the Australian farewell:

“Good-bye, Bull,” he said. “That was a hard thing you said about us. But a man must make mistakes sometimes. I’ve made mistakes meself. And you didn’t say anything about our socks, anyhow.”

THE END

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